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Open Aid Demand: A Case Study

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Open Aid Demand: A Case Study

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Open Aid Demand: A Case Study

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

Supervisor: Catherine Weaver

This professional report explores donor and government use of open aid information. Current open aid and transparency literature focuses on the supply of open aid information, but neglects exploring stakeholders' ability and willingness to use the data. This report uses the case study methodology and finds little evidence of donor use of open aid data in Uganda due to technical, political and data barriers. It does find robust government use in Nepal. The report hopes to guide others as they continue to explore open aid data impact among various stakeholders.

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"Comparisons with 2001." *Poverty by District in Nepal, Mapped*. Web.

12 Apr. 2015. <<http://prabhasp.github.io/NepalMaps/Poverty/>62

Chapter 1: Introduction: *A Study of Demand*

In 2009, the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand, announced initiatives to open government information and data. This catalyzed the open data movement. Through initiatives like the Open Government Partnership (OGP), to date “over 55 countries [have] pledged concrete commitments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance with a strong emphasis on open data as a means to achieve this.”¹ As of 2012, it is estimated governments have published over one million datasets on the Internet. More interesting for this paper, there is the “Open Data for Development” (OD4D) movement that is strongly embedded in this global open data movement.

At the heart of OD4D is the international movement to increase transparency and accountability in development aid. The origins of the international aid transparency movement go back over a decade, stemming from a series of high level international forums, such as the Paris Declaration (2005) and Accra Accords (2008), convened to build momentum around the Millennium Development Goal of improved donor coordination, harmonization and aid effectiveness. The net result of these forums was a strong convergence of “pressure on existing reporting systems to include more comprehensive, detailed, accessible and comparable information on aid activities and results.”² In response, the international donor community established numerous systems, both at the global and national levels, to improve upon existing systems (such as the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System) to capture more detailed, comprehensive and timely information on aid in open

¹ "Open Government Partnership." Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>>.

² Weaver, Catherine, Stephen Davenport, Justin Baker, Michael Findley, Christian Peretsakis, and Josh Powell. "Malawi's Open Aid Map." World Bank Institute (2014): Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/Data/wbi/wbicms/files/drupal-acquia/wbi/malawi_case_study%281%29.pdf>.

access forms that would trigger essential feedback mechanisms to make aid more accountable to donor taxpayers and poor country beneficiaries, as well as better equipped to provide the impact data necessary to pursue a an emerging results-based management agenda.

More specifically, *open* aid data is broadly described as knowledge that is free to access, use, modify, and share.. Historically, governments have led the way in opening data, but donors and NGOs in the international development sector has quickly followed suit. Following a series of high-level mandates to improve aid effectiveness and shape the global development agenda to better align with the Millennium Development Goals, the international donor community launched major efforts to increase the wealth of accessible information on aid flow. These ranged from international open data registries like the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)³, and national platforms such as the UK's DevTracker⁴ open aid platform. Likewise, aid receiving countries built upon open data initiatives by adopting in-country aid information management systems (AIMS) to better capture timely and comprehensive data on the on- and off-budget aid in their countries.

However with so many lofty goals for open aid information, not a lot of studies or empirical evidence can be found on actors' ability to access and use open aid information. To date, substantial anecdotal and survey evidence has been generated about the material success of aid transparency. Understandably, most instances of asserted success have relied upon evidence that shows an increase in the amount of open information on aid, but with scant evidence on how that information is being used, by whom and how. For example,

³ <http://www.aidtransparency.net/>. IATI is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative that publishes data on development cooperation activities in a standard format. Since 2011 over 300 organizations have published their data on it.

⁴ <http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/>. The tracker is built using open data published by UK Government and partners, using the IATI Standard. The Development Tracker allows you to find and explore detailed information on international development projects funded by the UK Government.

Nepal is often held up as an example of the success of aid transparency, yet according to subject matter experts, this is little known about open data's impact. In other words, there is little "evidence of how this data is being used by government and donors to inform planning, coordination, and management."⁵ Other potential stakeholders of open aid information include government agencies, implementing partners, citizen groups, media, and aid donors (who also play an essential role in providing aid data from their own agencies). According to AidData, they work to make data available to government agencies and civil society groups, but donor agencies invested in accountability have more readily taken advantage of the available data.⁶ Given the lack of understanding of stakeholder accessibility and use of open aid data, I decided to further explore government and donor use myself by simulating the roles of different end users. My objective is to discern not only what challenges there are to accessing data, but how easy or difficult it is to answer key questions and conduct simple analysis with the data. This type of direct test is essential to filling the gap between the supply of open aid and what we understand about the patterns of use, and eventually the impact of such open information on aid decisions, including funding allocations, project planning, donor coordination, and evaluation of aid's effectiveness. In the simplest sense, this tests the implicit claim in the open aid movement that "if you build it, they will come."

METHODOLOGY

For this paper, I take a mixed methods approach. I first conducted a literature review to see what information already exists on open aid, specifically on open aid demand. Much of this process was done in conjunction with my Policy Research Project, under the direction of Dr. Catherine Weaver, with 17 classmates. This literature review provided me

⁵ "Development Gateway Interview." Personal interview. 19 Sept. 2014.

⁶ "Alena Stern and Samantha Custer Interview," Skype interview with PRP class. 16 Sept. 2014.

with a theoretical background on the supply and demand of open aid. More importantly, it lead me to a theory of change that revolved around three user groups: donors, recipient governments, and citizens. Given the obvious and well-documented difficulty in open aid information reaching citizens, I decided to focus on the first two user groups. My objective was to mimic an end user from these groups and access open aid data (specifically data housed in borrower governments' aid management platforms, described below).

I then decided to empirically test the ability of each of the two user groups to use the data to reach meaningful goals. To do this, I used academic papers and the explicit rationale of suppliers for providing open aid information, in order to create appropriate use cases and goals for each group. I “test” to see if I am able to accomplish my set recipient government and donor goals with open aid data currently available. Earlier in the introduction, I described open data as knowledge that is free to access, use, modify, and share, a definition developed by Tim Davies in *Researching the Emerging Impacts of Open Data*.⁷ More specifically for this paper, I rely on open data in the Aid Management Portal, supplemented by IATI open aid information. This information typically contains aid project locations (varies on specificity), sector identification, donor(s), start date, end data, project commitment and project disbursement. I picked two countries, Nepal and Uganda, because they both have open Aid Management Platforms (AMP)⁸. Development Gateway, the creators of the AMP, also indicated that both countries were likely to be open aid

⁷ Tim Davies. "Researching the Emerging Impacts of Open Data." ODDC (2013): Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.opendataresearch.org/sites/default/files/posts/Researching%20the%20emerging%20impacts%20of%20open%20data.pdf>>.

⁸ The Aid Management Platform (AMP) is an online software application through which government officials can track and monitor development projects and programs. From planning through implementation of aid activities, government and donor staff use AMP to enter and edit information, generate charts, graphs, and maps to monitor vital trends and statistics, and produce reports on public development spending. Highly customizable, it supports a country's national development framework, reduces administrative workload and costs, and enables close coordination with donors. AMP has been implemented in over 20 countries on 4 continents. The AMP is created by Development Gateway in partnership with country governments.

success stories (Nepal significantly more so than Uganda).⁹ Because Nepal and Uganda¹⁰ are most likely to be success cases, I decided that if my tests failed, it would lend more credibility to my conclusions.

I then informed my conclusions with semi-structured interviews with donors and NGOs in Uganda and Nepal. In Uganda, three classmates, my professor Dr. Catherine Weaver, and I conducted 22 interviews with 32 individuals in March 2016. These interviews account for approximately 81% of total aid disbursed in Uganda since 2008.

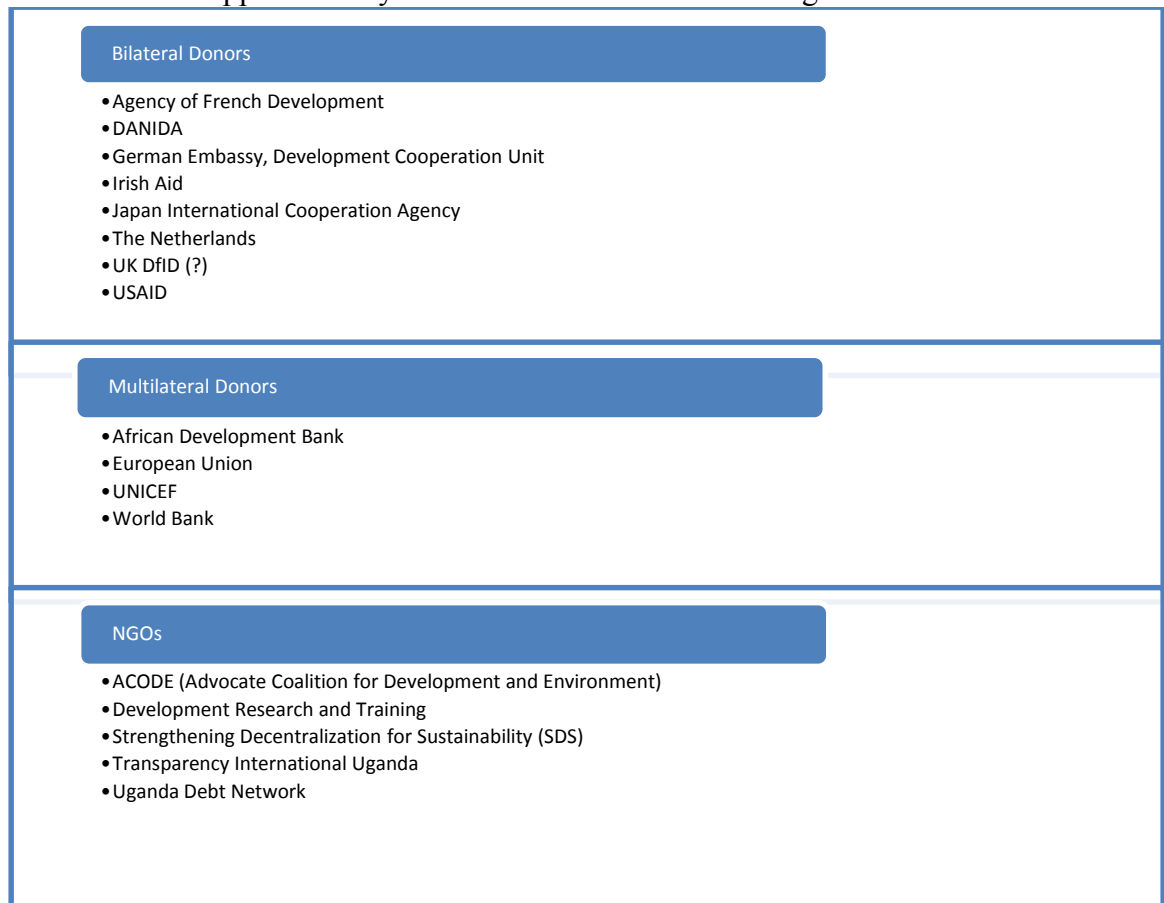


Figure 1: List of Uganda Interviews Conducted

⁹ Interview with staff of Development Gateway, 19 Sept. 2015.

¹⁰ Uganda was noted as likely to be a success story given the AMP development and buy-in from the government. It is not yet considered a success case.

Similarly, my classmates conducted seven interviews in Nepal in December 2014 and March 2015.

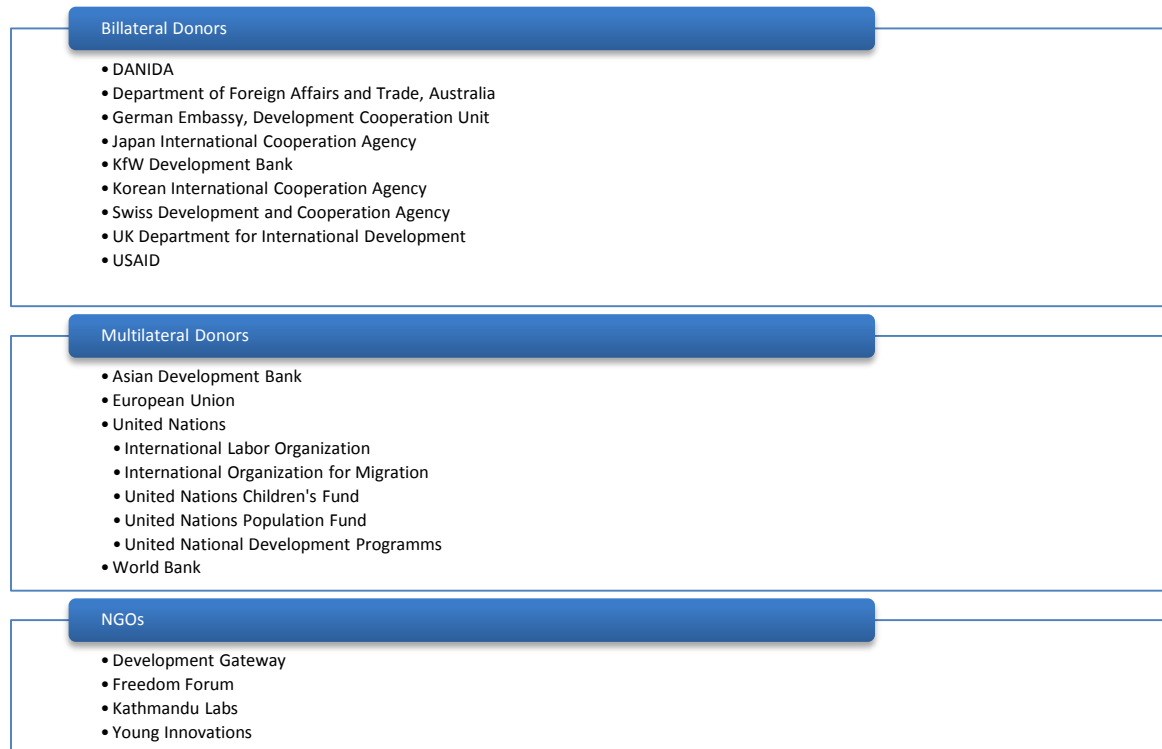


Figure 2: List of Nepal Interviews Conducted

These interviews were semi-structured, and lasted about an hour. Quite a few agencies provided information pertinent to my question of access and use, including JICA, USAID, and Germany Development Cooperation. Further information on interview selection, design and methodology can be found in Appendix one.¹¹ The interviews also offer qualitative support to my final conclusions. Then, in the case of Uganda, I conducted quantitative analysis of existing aid data to see how many projects are co-financed and what donors are most likely to partner on a project. In Nepal, I used qualitative studies, conducted by the government themselves, as well as NGOs to inform my conclusions.

¹¹ PRP, citation forthcoming, Ch. 3

Unfortunately, research like this does not exist in the case of Uganda. It is also important to note, that I found no prior studies that empirically tested donor use of open aid information.

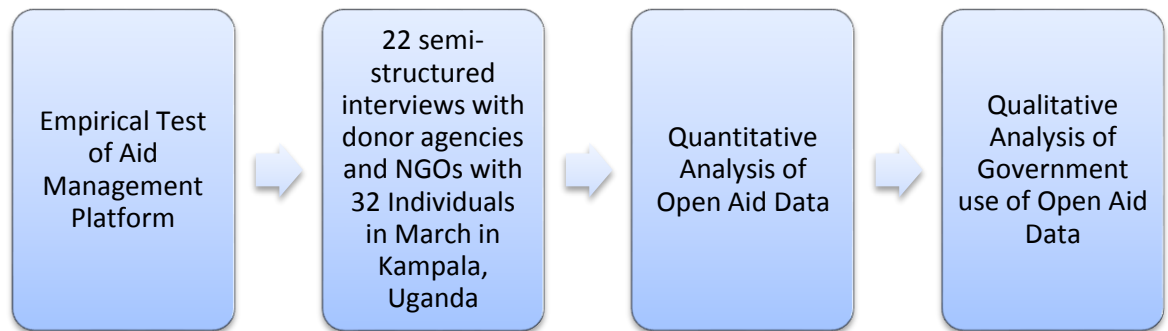


Figure 3: Paper Methodology

I recognize the limitations of my methodology. First, it represents only a short period in time. My research was conducted over a span of four months, and at any time radical technical changes to the AMP may be made, or government and donor support of open aid may change. For example the Uganda AMP was upgraded shortly after we left Kampala and I wrote this paper.¹² Given that the aid transparency movement has only recently gained traction in some countries, sizeable changes may occur in the short term that will affect the conclusions of this paper. In addition, I only studied two countries, and there could be a number of other country-specific factors at even given point in time that would modify the results of my test. However, given the mixed methods approach and lack of evidence that exists around open aid demand, I believe this is a very good start to beginning to understand some of the database access issues that will shape demand and

¹² I spent some time exploring the upgraded system. The first time I did the front page did not load until after I talked with Dustin Homer from Development Gateway. The second time, the front page loaded; the map section did not. On the dashboard section, 3 of the 8 graphics loaded after 20 minutes of waiting. I was unable to change the filters or setting son any of the 3 graphics. In addition, according to Dustin Homer, government officials, donors and others received extensive training after our interviews were conducted. I believe most of the conclusions in this paper despite the upgrade and increased trainings.

use. In this way, my hope is to help inform ongoing efforts to modify in-country aid management systems to identify barriers, and opportunities, for use of open data.

OBJECTIVE AND ROADMAP

Simply stated, the driving objective of this Professional Report is to better understand the current state of open data and the ability for donors and recipient governments to use the data to accomplish their goals. Chapter two investigates the use of open aid information to improve donor coordination in Uganda. The chapter provides context on donor coordination and open aid information, as well as their relationship to potentially improve aid effectiveness. The chapter also gives background and context on the transparency and open aid and data movement in Uganda. Then, I conduct empirical tests to see if I can use existing open aid information to meet set donor coordination objectives. The chapter concludes with information on the current state of donor coordination and potential improvements to the aid information management systems. Chapter 3 then sets out to explore the potential of governments to use open aid information to improve aid-related decision-making. It starts by providing contextual background on existing literature on the topic. I then provide information on the current state of the open aid and data movement in Nepal. Similarly to chapter 2, chapter 3 tests the practicality of using open aid information to accomplish government objectives. Chapter 4 then provides a comparison of open aid information systems in Nepal versus Uganda. It also provides analysis on the potential for improving government use in Uganda and the potential for improving donor coordination in Nepal.

Chapter 2: Donor Coordination Use: *Uganda Case Study*

In this chapter, I study how open aid information affects donor coordination in Uganda, defined as concerted efforts to both share information on individual activities to ensure effective allocation of aid and exchange of lessons learned, as well as pursue intra-agency activities in the form of joint programming or co-financing to ensure the most efficient use of aid resources in countries. Both the MDGs and the Paris Declaration of 2005 cite donor coordination as a needed reform to increase aid effectiveness (this will be further elaborated on in the proceeding chapter). Lack of aid coordination can contribute to dismal aid performance and the unmanaged growth in the number of aid donors (both governmental and non-governmental) and aid projects within a country. This in turn leads to aid fragmentation, which increases the administrative burden on recipient countries in terms of project management (including oversight and reporting back to aid funders), and can lead to project duplication (aid from multiple donors going to the same sector and/or same location). There are a number of reasons and conjectures on why this persists: institutional incentives do not align, donors want to increase their influence in a country, and recipient governments have weak capacity for oversight and control of donors. While many believed that open aid information would allow donors to better coordinate and align with donors with similar interests, this theory has not been empirically tested. This section sets out to test how donors could improve coordination with existing data. Overall I found that numerous barriers to donor coordination through open aid information exist: technical challenges with the UAMP, a lack of political incentives to use the open aid information, large discrepancies with existing data and procedures to collect it and most critically, the lack of perception that donor coordination is a problem in Uganda.

In this chapter, I will start by providing a theoretical background on the merits of donor coordination and the perceived effects of open aid information. I then will use existing open aid information myself to discover how the current information could be used for donor coordination. Lastly, I will discuss the results from this effort, as well as

information gathered when I travelled to Uganda to conduct donor interviews with my professor, Dr. Catherine Weaver, and three classmates. Finally, I will conclude with the state of donor coordination in Uganda. Overall I find, surprisingly, that donor coordination is not perceived as a problem in Uganda. In addition, I find little evidence that donors will improve coordination with the information currently available in the AMP.

DONOR COORDINATION

One of the biggest complaints in aid effectiveness is the lack of donor specialization. A big part of the problem is duplication of efforts, which leads to multiple reporting requirements for overstretched aid recipients. Therefore, in 2005, the Paris Declaration codified the need for coordination in one of their key five pillars: harmonization. This pillar stated *Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.*¹³ As a follow-up, the Accra Accords in 2008 reinforced the principles of aid transparency and donor coordination and effective delivery. The Accra Agenda for Action states, “The effectiveness of aid is reduced when there are too many duplicating initiatives, especially at country and sector levels.”¹⁴

Academics have supported the goals set forth in these international conferences. In “*Where does the money go? Best and worst practices in foreign aid*,” Easterly and Pfutze (2008) identify five best practices for aid effectiveness: agency transparency, minimal overhead costs, fragmentation of aid, delivery to more effective channels and allocation to less corrupt, more democratically free, poor countries.¹⁵ To decrease fragmentation of aid, the authors advocate for specialization amongst donors in countries and in sectors. Using these five principles, the Easterly and Williamson (2012) rank

¹³ OECD, "The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness". March 2, 2005.

¹⁴ OECD, "The Accra Agenda For Action", 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, September 4, 2008, p. 17

¹⁵ Easterly, William, and Tobias Pfutze. 2008. "Where Does the Money Go? Best and Worst Practices in Foreign Aid." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(2): 29-52.

donors in *Rhetoric versus Reality: The Best and Worst of Aid Agency Practices*. In this paper they find that there are 24 agencies that each account for less than 1% of the total budget of all official development assistance in their select sample of countries; a results that again suggests high fragmentation of aid. In 2006, on a global level, they found that 38 recipient countries each received assistance from 25 or more DAC and multilateral donors. In 24 of these countries, 15 or more donors collectively provided less than 10% of that country's total aid.¹⁶ This study demonstrates the problem of aid fragmentation and the lack of donor coordination.

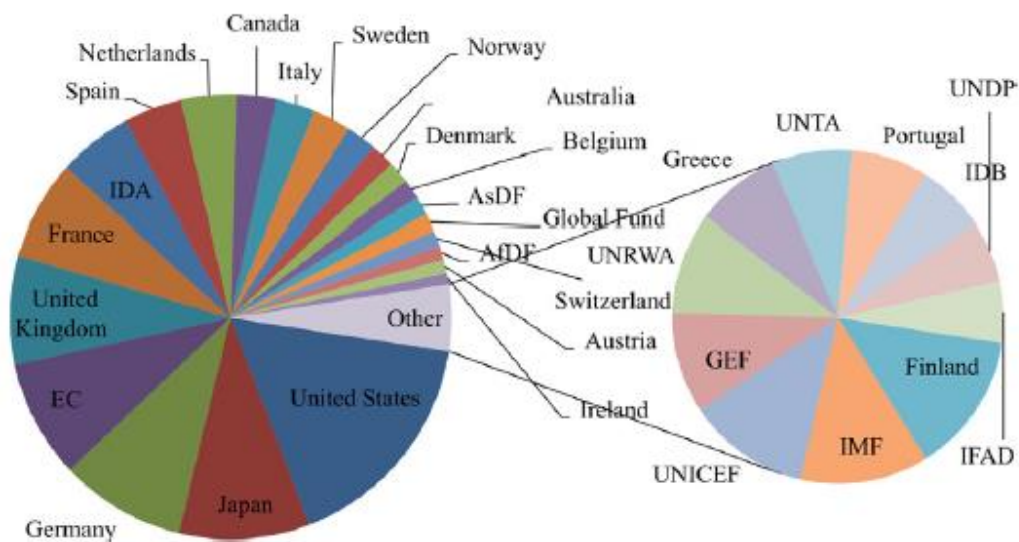


Figure 4: Share of Gross ODA by donor 2008, Easterly and Williamson 2012

Many of these small agencies have high fixed start-up costs. With so many agencies and highly fragmented aid, duplication of efforts is more likely. Easterly and Williamson find that despite heated criticism and reform efforts, there has not been a reduction in fragmentation. When discussing aid effectiveness, it seems obvious that increased donor

¹⁶ Easterly, William and Williamson, Claudia R., *Rhetoric versus Reality: The Best and Worst of Aid Agency Practices* (May, 14 2012). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2058330>

coordination is one important component in reducing overhead costs and preventing duplication of efforts.

DONOR COORDINATION AND AID TRANSPARENCY

As discussed in the introduction, advocates for aid transparency have hypothesized that improved aid transparency and information systems would increase donor coordination. Advocates believed that donors would use open data to better coordinate and plan projects. Theoretically, datasets and maps created with open aid information could identify optimal sites for development projects. Open aid information would reduce information asymmetries, allowing donors to better understand what other donors are doing. Donors should then be less likely to plan duplicating projects and work together when synergies exist. Data could also be used during monitoring and evaluation to enhance development projects' effectiveness. Suppliers and advocates of aid information systems justify their efforts based on this theory of change. For example, Publish What You Fund, a global campaign for aid transparency writes about "The Problem." The first thing listed on this section of their website is "Donor governments don't know what other donors are spending or planning to spend. This is leading to the duplication of efforts in some areas and under funding in others. Without aid transparency, donors cannot coordinate to achieve the maximum impact with their scarce resources."¹⁷ In a recent February 2015 blog post based on a joint panel of key transparency experts, Brookings Institution Senior Scholar and MFAN Co-Director George Ingram writes:

Transparency promotes market intelligence and facilitates coordination. If all donors share their information, the development community as a whole will have a clearer understanding of what other development agencies are doing and will be able to identify what has worked and what has not worked. Coordination is almost impossible in countries that are the focus of tens of

¹⁷ "The Global Campaign for Aid Transparency." *Publish What You Fund*. Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/>>.

donor agencies and hundreds of projects—it is just not feasible to get all the right people in the same room and sift through all the requisite material. But, if everyone publishes timely, comprehensive data in a common format through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), anyone can learn what other donors are doing in a particular sector or region of a country. Coordination then becomes possible.¹⁸

In addition, Tierney, *et al* (2011), in “*More dollars than Sense: Refining our Knowledge of Development Finance Using AidData*,” says “AidData could help open up foreign assistance to new tests of its efficacy, assist coordination among an increasingly fragmented universe of aid donors and practitioners, and suggest ways that aid could be spent more usefully and productively.”¹⁹ In sum, there is no shortages of academics, advocates and practitioners that hypothesize or even state that aid transparency will improve donor coordination, which in turn will lead to improvements in overall aid effectiveness.

These works all lead us to expect that the key obstacle to donor coordination is the lack of available information on the financial and programmatic activities of aid donors in countries. Resolving this information gap through increased aid transparency and the provision of centralized, comprehensive and timely data on aid will eliminate the barrier. Despite all of these claims, when I inquire into open aid data and donor coordination practices at the recipient country level, I found little empirical evidence that donors were actually using open data towards the end of coordination, which suggests either there is a missing link between the supply and demand/use of data that this theory of change overlook, or donors do not in fact perceive open data as a instrumental source of information in their coordination activities. What is unknown at this point is *if* or *how* donors might begin to value and use open data once the initial barriers to access and data

¹⁸ Ingram, George. "Making Aid Transparency a Reality." Web log post. Brookings, 11 Feb. 2015. Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2015/02/11-aid-transparency-reality-ingram>>.

¹⁹ Tierney, Michael J., Daniel L. Nielson, Darren G. Hawkins, J. Timmons Roberts, Michael G. Findley, Ryan M. Powers, Bradley Parks, Sven E. Wilson, and Robert L. Hicks. "More Dollars than Sense: Refining Our Knowledge of Development Finance Using AidData." *World Development* 39.11 (2011): 1891-906. Web.

systems are strengthened, and awareness of the open aid dashboards grows among donor communities. Nonetheless, examining the conditions that seem to inhibit use at this early stages in the open data movement are essential to identify the gaps and challenges in the data systems themselves as well as the broader information ecosystem and political economy of aid in countries that might be deterring active engagement with open data.

UGANDA, AID AND OPEN DATA

Uganda is a historically aid-dependent country, with aid flows comprising approximately 40% of the gross budget in 2006²⁰. During the last few years, donors' relationship with the Ugandan government has fluctuated in response to corruption scandals in 2012 and the 2014 Anti-Homosexuality Bill. In 2012, donors' relationship with the government significantly deteriorated following an auditor general report that revealed that the Office of the Prime Minister had embezzled millions of dollars in aid money. The scandal caused most bilateral donors to switch their aid spending from on-budget to off-budget aid. While on-budget development aid has decreased, the Ugandan economy is poised to significantly grow as the discovery of oil promises future revenue streams and movement away from any remaining aid dependence.

Open Data and Transparency Movement

The shift towards greater openness and accountability in Uganda since the 2012 scandal has seen both progress and setbacks. The Government of Uganda has actively sought to make progress on transparency issues, for example, by publishing information on budget transfers to local governments.²¹ These initiatives are in line with the Ministry of Finance's push for national public financial management reform. As a result of these

²⁰ "UGANDA: Aid Cuts Threaten Vital Public Services." *IRINnews*, Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.irinnews.org/report/97059/uganda-aid-cuts-threaten-vital-public-services>>.

²¹ "Know Your Budget." *Uganda Budget Information*. Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.budget.go.ug>>.

efforts, Uganda has risen higher in the Transparency Index, but still ranks 142 out of 175 countries. Uganda also ranks highest among African countries on the Open Budget Index, surpassed only by South Africa.

Uganda has worked to increase public access to statistical and budget data through a number of initiatives. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) collects data and publishes nationally aggregated statistics to support decisions, policies, and development initiatives.²² UBOS also recently rolled out a Community Information System containing sub-district data from household surveys²³. The Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (MoFPED) also offers disaggregated budget data for the public to review and provide feedback. Two additional systems that have been utilized in health and education decisions are the Health Management Information System and the Education Management Information System.

To facilitate this movement towards transparency, the government has developed a legal basis for data transparency and access to information. Uganda is one of 13 African countries that have adopted legislation supporting access to information in the form of the Access to Information Act of 2010.²⁴ There are, however, a number of exceptions within this legal framework. For example, the government has the ability to withhold information related to the operation of public bodies and commercial information if that information can disadvantage the third party.²⁵ Information seekers must fill out multiple forms in order

²² “About Us.” Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Web. 27 Apr. 2015. < <http://www.ubos.org/about-us/>>

²³ Uganda Bureau of Statistics Strategic Plan, <http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/pdf%20documents/PNSD/UBOS%20SSPS.pdf>, Date Access March 27, 2015.

²⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/article/uganda-passes-access-information-act#.VT6RLyFViko>

²⁵ 1995 Constitution - Article 41: “Every citizen has a right of access to information in the possession of the State or any other organ or agency of the State except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the State or interfere with the right to the privacy of any other person. 7” ; “Parliament shall make laws prescribing the classes of information referred to in clause (1) of this article and the procedure for obtaining access to that information.”

to request information from the government, making the process complicated and slow. Further, individuals are not allowed to submit anonymous information requests and are required to pay an access fee for each request, thereby limiting who can access information.

The AMP

The UAMP is hosted on a local server with the Uganda's Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. It was originally termed the Public Investment Management information System (PIMIS). However, when the system became public in October 2014, the name was changed to UAMP: Uganda Aid Management Platform. In 2014, the system became accessible to public.

The AMP tracks all external development assistance projects in the country. It has on-going budget projects since fiscal year 2007/2008, as well as a map with project information.²⁶ Thus far, the system contains information on 38 donors and has recorded 574 projects. The system has a total of USD12.75 billion in commitments, and USD8 billion in disbursements. The platform was created with a partnership between Development Gateway and the Government of Uganda. The project was also supported by United Nations Development Program (UNDP), U.S. Agency for International Development- Higher Education Solution Network (USAID-HESN) and AidData.²⁷

ANALYSIS

Given the many declarations that open aid platforms would increase donor coordination, I decided to assume the role of a donor in Uganda and see how I could collect information myself with the goal of increasing coordination with other donors in Uganda.

²⁶ Note: I have never actually seen this map, due to problems logging into the system. I made the assumption it had this information.

²⁷ Interview with Dustin Homer (Development Gateway). E-mail interview. 17 Feb. 2015.

I decided to start with the Uganda Aid Management Platform (UAMP) as my first source of information because it is the most accessible source and has the most specific geolocation information.

Since I began trying to use the platform in January 2015, I have been unable to access and/or load the platform the majority of the time. In a span of four months, I've attempted to access the website 24 times. One time the dashboard section fully loaded, 3 times it partially loaded before I got an error message; the remaining of the time it did not loaded. The map section has never loaded. It is important to note, that the website loads while on internet browser Mozilla, but not from the Google Chrome browser. It took me quite a few attempted website loads to realize this. You can access the website here: <http://154.72.196.70/portal/>. The homepage looks like this.

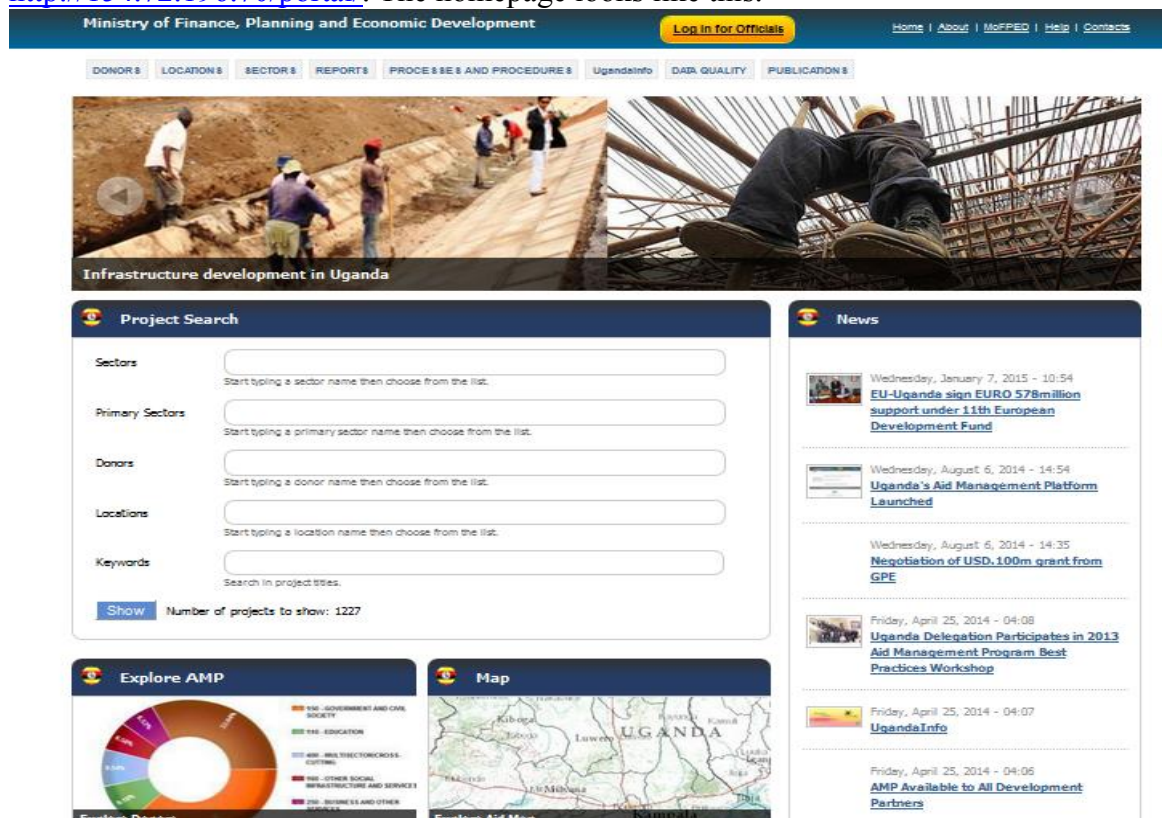


Figure 5: AMP Website Homepage, <http://154.72.196.70/portal/>

On occasion, I am able to get this first page loaded but would be unable to access the “Explore AMP” or “map” section. While in Kampala on Sunday morning, March 22nd (and with a solid internet connection), I was able to access the Explore AMP section for the first time. When fully loaded the page looks like this:

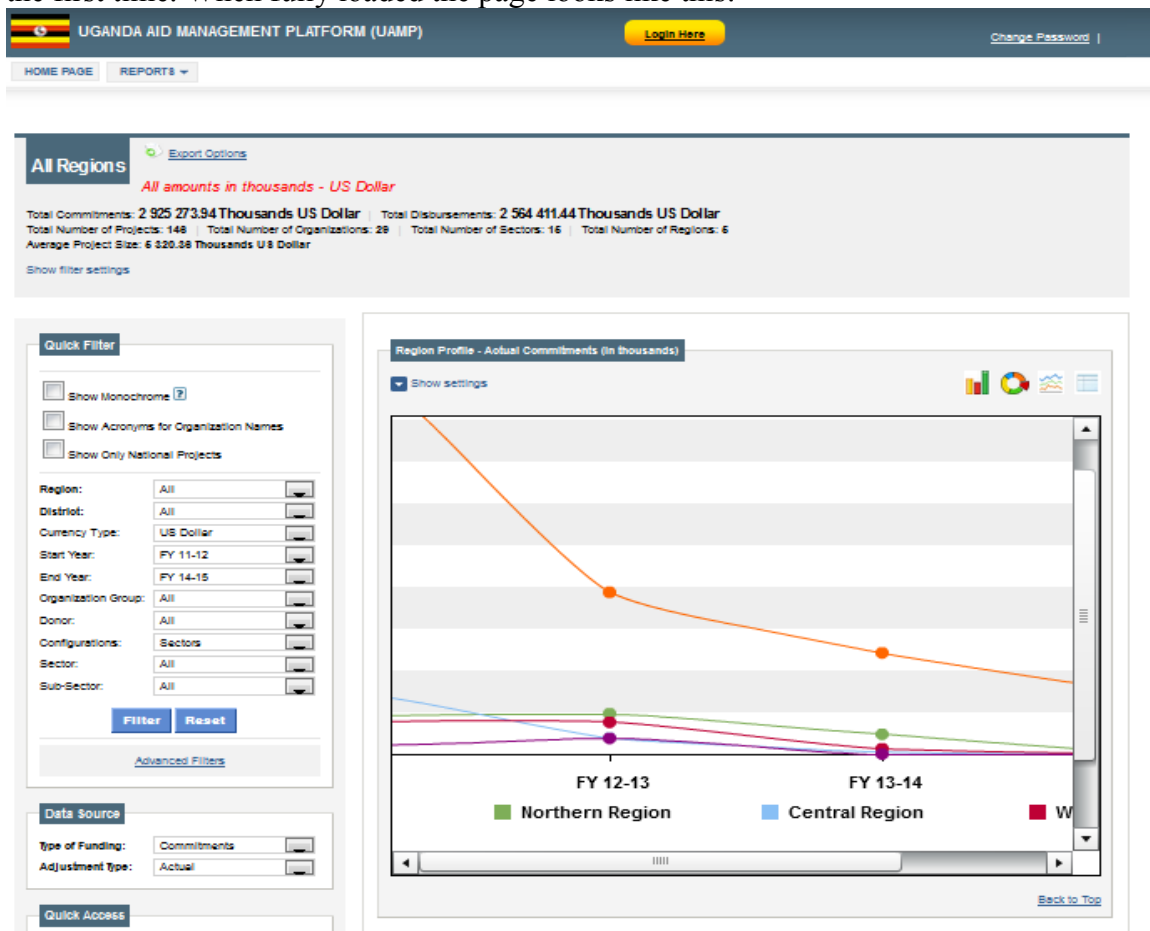


Figure 6: Uganda AMP, Search Portal, <http://154.72.196.70/portal/>

As you can see, the site features the option to filter by region, district, currency type, start year, end year, organization group, donor, configurations, sector and sub-sector. Also, one can sort by type of funding and adjustment type. The site then features a number of graphs including, region profile, ODA historical trend- planned commitments, aid

predictability-planned commitments (this graph does not actually show planned amounts, just actuals by year), aid type- planned commitments, aid modality-planned commitments, sector profile- planned commitments, and organization profile-planned commitments. In upcoming analysis, I will show what exists theoretically, and what filters work in reality.

On March 22, I tried to load the Map section. Per usual, after waiting 30 minutes, the page would not load and I gave up on this feature. Here is what the page looks like while loading (notice the spinning wheel).

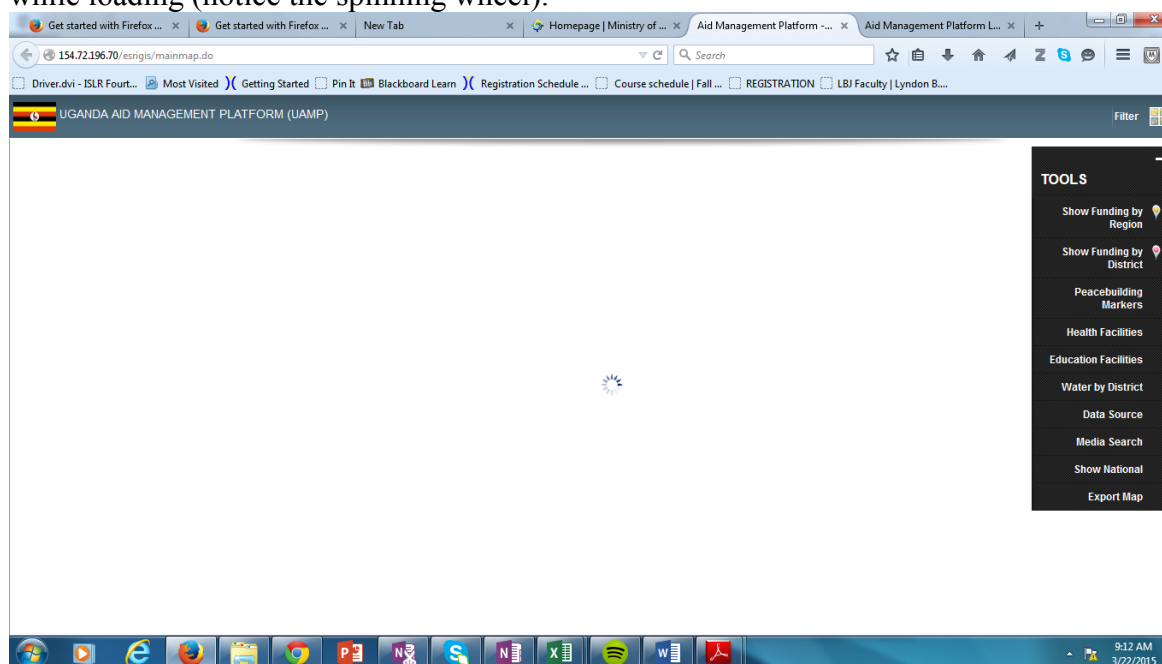


Figure 7: AMP Website, Map Feature, <http://154.72.196.70/portal/>

It is also important to note that while conducting interviews with 32 individuals and 22 donor agencies and NGOs in Kampala, many donors told us that they are not able to access UAMP through their Embassy internet security firewalls.²⁸ The Ministry of Finance suggested that they set aside one “open computer” for donors that was not connected to the firewall. Therefore, it is highly likely that, for a donor to get the information they need, the

²⁸ "Interview with DANIDA." Personal interview. 17 Mar. 2015.

individual has to claim a time spot at the one open, non-secured computer in the Embassy and get the website to load (assuming the Embassy allows a computer with the installed firewalls). With the prospect of the website not properly loading after waiting for the one open computer, it is easily conceivable that a donor may just give up on using the UAMP. Also if the donor tries to log on once and it doesn't work, there might be little incentive to ever try to log-on again without incentives or a push from the Ministry.

However, let's pretend that the donor did not run into these logistical and technical problems and still wanted to use the information for donor coordination. How could they do that? I decided to walk through the process myself. I decided to place myself in a large donor's shoes and pretend they wanted to find other donors to partner with on a potential project. I made the idealistic assumption that they want to align their project with one of Uganda's national priorities, as laid out in their National Development Plan. The National Development Plan (NDP) has eight main objectives: I randomly picked number three: Enhance Availability and Quality of Gainful Employment. The description of this objective says it has "two aspects: quantity and quality. Its attainment will be assessed by: increased generation, distribution, access to and consumption of electricity; quantity and quality of road network; increased functionality of the railway network; increased access to telecommunication services; access to mass public transport; and access to affordable banking services."²⁹ I specifically chose electricity because that is the number one priority listed under this objective. I also decided, because the Northern region faces the highest poverty incidents, to see who works in the area that I could partner with. The NDP states "In spite of the introduction of equalization grants to bring disadvantaged local governments to the level of service delivery comparable to the rest of the country, regional

²⁹ Republic of Uganda. National Planning Authority. *National Development Plan 2011-2015*.

imbalances still exist. This is partly demonstrated by disparities in poverty levels and social development indicators.

When I tried to access the AMP on Monday March 23rd at 5 PM, while still in Kampala, the website would no longer load for me. Therefore, I went to the Aid Data website and downloaded Uganda Aid Management Platform data from here: <http://aiddata.org/geocoded-datasets>. The website describes the data as, “this is the initial quality controlled version of all geocoded aid project locations in the Uganda Aid Management Platform.”³⁰ The zip file includes

- geocoded data (CSV)
- IATI Standard organization list (CSV)
- AidData activity codes list (CSV)
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) boundary shapefile
- Uniform Collateral Data Portal (UCDP) geocoding methodology (PDF)
- Readme file (PDF)

Theoretically, this data set should be the same information that is currently in the AMP, other than what donors themselves have uploaded recently. However, in the donor interviews, no donor indicated they had uploaded updated information into the AMP.

I downloaded the dataset and added filters to each existing column. I then sorted column F “Primary_Sector”. I left projects that were in the following sectors: works and transport, energy and mineral development, water and environment, Tourism, Trade and Industry. This elicited quite a few projects, so I decided to just pick energy and mineral development. This left me with three projects:

³⁰ "Geocoded Datasets | AidData 3.0." AidData, n.d. Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <<http://aiddata.org/geocoded-datasets>>.

Project ID	Project Title	Agency	Effective Date
87299464629	MBARARA-BUSHENYI-KASESE TRANSMISSION LINE	Norway	12/17/1998
87299465057	NYAGAK/PAIDHA HYDRO POWER PROJECT	Germany	1/1/2006
87299465061	KAMPALA-ENTEBBE TRANSMISSION LINE	Germany	*committed funds for 2013

Table 1: Energy Sector Search Results, Source: AidData Dataset

Therefore, for coordination purposes, if I were a real donor, I could consider contacting Norway or Germany on potential electricity partnerships. However, because these projects were quite long ago, I might be hesitant to extract this data for the purposes of planning a future project. The third project listed by Germany, could still be ongoing, and therefore may be of interest to me as a donor. However, without any data on 2014, 2015 or committed or projected project funds, it is impossible to really see who is currently working in this sector and who may be thinking of working in this sector in the future.

In addition, project data is missing. For example, when we met with JICA officials in Kampala, we discussed a large project they were working on in hydroelectricity in Bujagali – yet this was missing in the available AMP data.³¹ Furthermore, the data in the AMP does not include commitments beyond 2013 or donor projections. If you are looking to partner and coordinate with other donors than you need to know their future intentions not just extrapolate based on what they did in the past. Lastly, coordination using this data would be extremely difficult and weak because each project has a one line title for the project. It is difficult to know if the “energy project” is a large scale pipeline, a

³¹ "Interview with JICA." Personal interview. 18 Mar. 2015.

hydroelectric dam, small scale power distribution by solar panels. A donor country's bias towards type of electricity is greatly affect what time of energy project they partner on.

I then tried the regional approach to see if I could use the UAMP information to target areas in highest need that not received requisite amounts of overall aid funding. The National Development Plan highlights the extensive poverty and vulnerability in the Northern Region of the country.

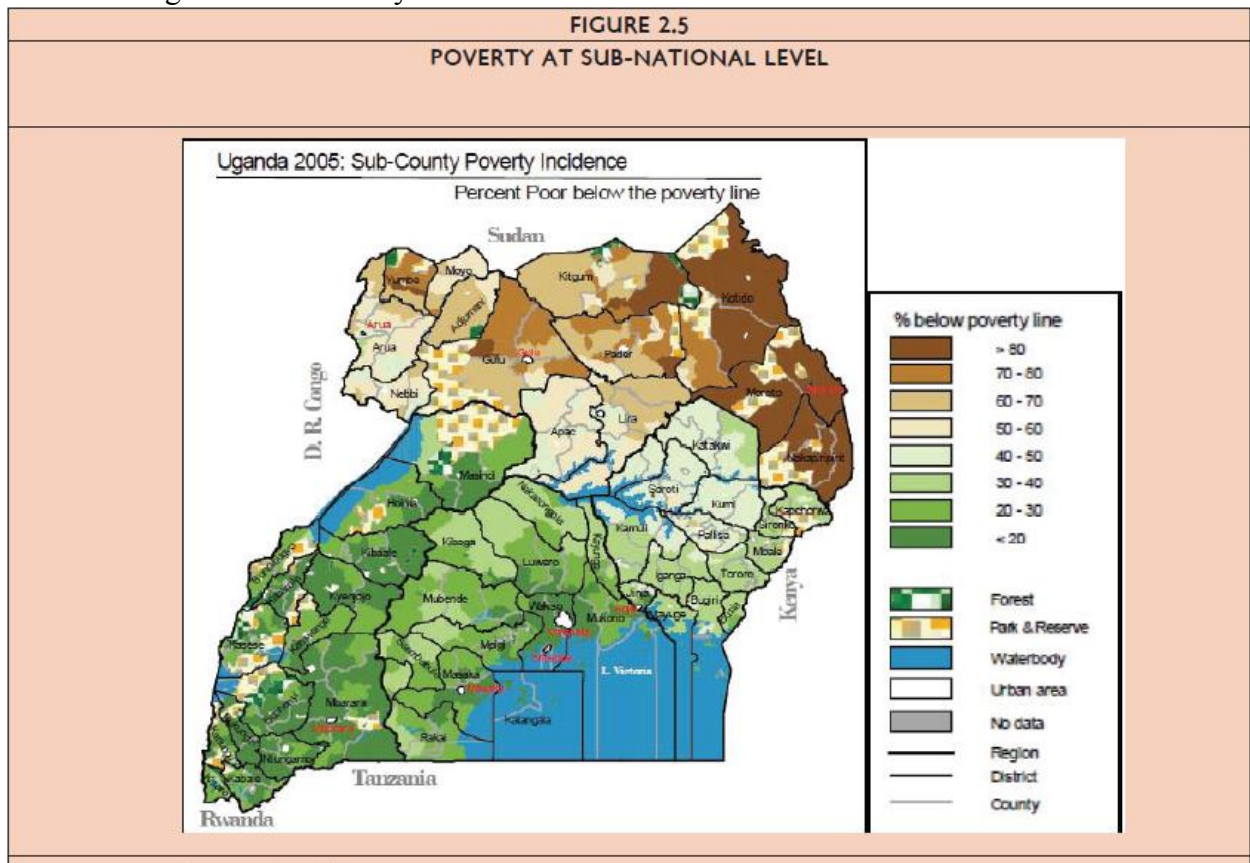


Figure 8: Poverty Vulnerability Map. Source; Republic of Uganda. National Planning Authority. *National Development Plan 2011-2015*. P. 14

I decided to focus on the following districts: Kitgum, Pader, Kotido, Moroto, Gulu, Nakapiripirit.³² The selection of districts is somewhat arbitrary but should suffice for this

³² It is important to note that since this map was made, district divisions have changed.

exercise. I filtered Column P “D2012” and selected each of these districts.³³ This search gave me 2381 rows of information, so I began to weed through the projects.

Project Duplication

Some projects have multiple rows of information because they are located in multiple districts. Therefore, I then spent quite a while deleting the extra rows from projects with multiple locations. I wanted to be able to get an estimate of how many projects donors had, and how much money was spent in total in the selected regions. I could not do this when there are multiple locations, because each location has the total project dollar amount. If I counted each location, this would greatly increase the total dollars spent in the region, and make donors without somewhat small projects all over the region seem like they were contributing more than they probably were.³⁴

Commitment and Disbursement Adjustments

Also to get total commitments and total disbursements, I have to take P and Q “Total_commitmentsTo2010_USD2011” and “total_disbursementsto2010_USD2011” And add in the 2011, 2012 and 2013 commitments and disbursements to each number respectively. It is unclear why this has not been done before. I also ignore inflation and keep 2011-2013 dollar figures current.

³³ It should be noted, I am quite familiar with geocoding methodology, as I geocoded much of these projects in 2014 in my role as Graduate Research Assistant for IPD, recipient of USAID-HESN grant. Therefore, I knew to use Column P to find district information despite its obscure name. I easily could have gone to column N “Place_Name” and then would have had to find all different sub-counties and counties that fell within the districts on which I wanted to focus. Because column N could indicate a region, a village, or a national project, there is no way to select just districts.

³⁴ It is also important to note, that the way I filtered by districts, would preclude projects that were mapped at only “northern region,” or that were given at National Level to be allocated to the north region.

My analysis here is definitely not precise. I also have to go through and again delete each project that has multiple row locations so I do not double count total commitments and disbursements. After sorting through the projects, by creating a pivot table that counts the number of projects each donor has, I reach the following conclusions:

Table 2: Northern Region Results, Source: AidData Dataset

Agency	Sum of Total Disbursements 2013	Sum of Total Commitments 2013
Sweden	1,429,455.63	0.00
United Kingdom	3,732,503.89	0.00
China	137,279.83	137,279.83
Ireland Japan	1,380,435.37	1,761,946.35
Norway	25,462,289.36	4,230,490.95
Netherlands	0.00	4,725,940.47
Austria	0.00	8,748,501.32
Belgium Nordic Development Fund	15,241,739.05	18,742,267.39
Japan	16,263,595.15	26,986,527.81
Ireland	10,195,545.28	32,187,265.36
Denmark/DANID A	19,868,886.07	35,266,863.89
European Union	35,125,975.33	78,039,983.64
International Development Association Japan	3,383,751.91	84,738,796.08
African Development Fund	96,556,585.96	100,872,900.03

Table 2 (continued)

Agency	Sum of Total Disbursements 2013	Sum of Total Commitments 2013
Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa Belgium Germany Islamic Development Bank Kuwait Fund for Development	1,835,064.61	135,554,383.88
United States of America	67,107,400.00	179,260,546.29
International Development Association	246,487,119.37	569,845,232.53
Grand Total	544,807,626.80	1,281,098,925.82

Therefore, if I were to work in the North, I might contact the World Bank or United States about potential partnerships based on how much money they have already spent. However, based on sheer count of projects, UK, Norway, Japan, Austria and EU would all be potential partners or at least important consultations as I moved forward with project planning.

Status Quo Donor Coordination

These exercises took approximately 16 hours.³⁵ The challenges were numerous: problems with project accuracy, technical problems, and a requirement of a high level of understanding for Excel. In the end, the results did not provide information that appeared insightful.

What are the implications for donor coordination in Uganda? Based upon field interviews in Kampala, we have good reason to believe that donor coordination is happening without the use of UAMP information. This is not surprisingly, as donors have been present in Uganda for decades preceding the AMP and have established mechanisms for sharing information and pursuing coordination. In other words, there are alternative ways that donors seek out and attain information on the aid activities of other donors in the country. As shown in Table 3, the sector coordination groups amongst various donors and sometimes the Uganda government meet somewhat regularly and with decent (if not even or comprehensive) participation. You can see in Table 3, there are 16 different working groups, and a somewhat accurate record of who attends and leads each meeting. With sub-groups there are a number more. However, this does not capture the level of activity of each group or the outcomes in terms of type of coordination.

³⁵ I have worked with this data before and my level of familiarity is going to be higher than most. I also have high-level Excel skills that allowed me to speed up the process using macros and Excel shortcuts. Without this prior knowledge and skills, I think it would have taken a lot longer.

Furthermore, many donors did not see information sharing between donors as a problem in the country, and therefore did not readily see the value-added of the AMP for donor coordination. In many interviews, they reported that intra-donor communication solid, especially in donor meetings.³⁶ The frequency of sector group meetings varies, but on average they meet once a quarter. Donors also cited that when they decide they want to partner, they just call the donor partner directly based on previously-established relationships. Some of these relationships come from natural partners (for example EU partners with Nordic countries frequently), others are developed from sector working groups.

The AMP does not provide description of projects or ideas/projections that donors have for future projects or sector spending. To this end, donors acknowledged that the AMP would have limited utility as a coordination tool for program planning. One individual at a major bilateral organizations cited that the agency has its own country development strategy, and thus he does not believe that information on other donors' project location is that important. He justified this by saying that a single donor cannot cover an entire district, that projects are very specific, and that the needs of Uganda are big.³⁷

When we went to the German Embassy to talk with the Development Co-Operation, we found them to be the most knowledgeable about the UAMP amongst all the donors we interviewed. Nonetheless, they found it difficult to know what exactly was in the system and, even more importantly, what is not in it. If they do not know what the data are missing, they cannot trust the data for many purposes besides ballpark analysis. When asked in an ideal world how would they use the data, they said "we would use it as a reference point

³⁶ "Interview with JICA." Personal interview. 18 Mar. 2015.

³⁷ Personal interview. 16 Mar. 2015.

for information. Less for donor coordination. Information in sector groups already exist on this.”³⁸

In all of the interviews conducted, I found little evidence that open aid information systems, even in an ideal world with no technical difficulties and with perfect information, would be actively used by donors for donor coordination. Donor decision making in country is often decided by the political necessity of headquarters and/or their home country government. Decisions are also made based on institutional inertia or the culture of donor agencies. For example, some donors plan projects to further geopolitical interests, others have substantial home country public involvement in project determination. With so many forces driving project decisions, consideration of what other donor partners are doing may have little influence over an individual agency’s strategy. I found little to no evidence based on donor interviews that open aid information will change these cultural, political or historical reasons for planning an aid project. I have also found no existing academic papers that say otherwise.

Lastly, using the open aid data that exists out there, I decided to investigate how I thought donor coordination looked like in the country, in the limited sense of examining actual co-financing or joint programming. In the three figures below, you can see that average project commitment and disbursement size is much bigger for joint projects- this makes a lot of theoretical sense. You can also see that joint projects account for 20% of commitments and 16% of disbursements. While I could not find a benchmarking number in any of the academic readings about donor commitments, this seems like a reasonable amount of coordination. I had expected to see much lower numbers.

³⁸ "Interview with German Embassy- Cooperation Development." Personal interview. 20 Mar. 2015.

	Not Joint	Joint	Total	Joint Percentag
Average Project Commitment	19,110,663	66,205,970	22,228,471	
Average Project disbursement	12,650,785	34,162,634	14,074,915	
Total Project commitment	10,243,315,211	2,515,826,867	12,759,142,079	20%
Total Project Disbursement	6,780,821,019	1,298,180,082	8,079,001,101	16%

Table 4: Joint Project Analysis, Source: AidData Dataset

In the individual donor analysis, you can see which donors are more or less likely to give money in Uganda via joint projects. You can see the full donor list below. However, I also sorted the list by only those that have more than 10 projects (i.e. were larger donors), so the raw percentages were less skewed by those that only have one or two projects.

Table 5: Joint Project Analysis, Source: AidData Dataset

Donor Agencies	% of Joint Projects	% of Total Committed for Joint Projects	% of Total Disbursed for Joint Projects
African Capacity Building Foundation	0%	0%	0%
Canada	0%	0%	0%
European Investment Bank	0%	0%	0%
Iceland	0%	0%	0%

Table 5 (continued)

Donor Agencies	% of Joint Projects	% of Total Committed for Joint Projects	% of Total Disbursed for Joint Projects
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	0%	0%	0%
International Centre for Tropical Agriculture	0%	0%	0%
International Monetary Fund	0%	0%	0%
Spain	0%	0%	0%
Swedish International Development Authority	0%	0%	0%
Switzerland	0%	0%	0%
United States of America	5%	2%	3%
Japan	5%	5%	3%
European Union	12%	5%	5%
China	6%	6%	8%
United Kingdom	9%	7%	4%
International Development Association	33%	20%	16%
Ireland	25%	23%	21%
Denmark/DANIDA	24%	28%	41%
Belgium	40%	43%	39%

Table 5 (continued)

Donor Agencies	% of Joint Projects	% of Total Committed for Joint Projects	% of Total Disbursed for Joint Projects
Norway	10%	47%	15%
Germany	27%	49%	59%
African Development Fund	45%	54%	36%
Netherlands	27%	57%	65%
Austria	15%	69%	95%
Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries	67%	75%	100%
Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa	67%	87%	100%
Islamic Development Bank	50%	99%	68%
France	100%	100%	100%
International Atomic Energy Agency	100%	100%	100%
International Fund for Agricultural Development	100%	100%	100%
Kuwait Fund for Development	100%	100%	100%
Nordic Development Fund	100%	100%	100%
Saudi Fund for Development	100%	100%	100%
South Korea	100%	100%	100%

Table 5 (continued)

Donor Agencies	% of Joint Projects	% of Total Committed for Joint Projects	% of Total Disbursed for Joint Projects
Sweden	29%	100%	88%
United Nations Children's Fund	100%	100%	100%
United Nations Development Programme	13%	100%	83%
United Nations Populations fund	100%	100%	100%

Table 6: Joint Project Analysis, Source: AidData Dataset

Donor Agencies	Total projects	% of Joint Projects	% of Total Committed for Joint Projects	% of Total Dispersed for Joint Projects
United States of America	21	5%	2%	3%
Japan	91	5%	5%	3%
European Union	68	12%	5%	5%
China	35	6%	6%	8%
United Kingdom	67	9%	7%	4%
International Development Association	40	33%	20%	16%
Ireland	28	25%	23%	21%
Denmark/DANIDA	38	24%	28%	41%
Belgium	15	40%	43%	39%
Norway	77	10%	47%	15%
Germany	15	27%	49%	59%
African Development Fund	11	45%	54%	36%
Netherlands	11	27%	57%	65%
Austria	41	15%	69%	95%
Sweden	17	29%	100%	88%
United Nations Development Programme	23	13%	100%	83%

Here you can visually see that U.S., Japan, EU, China and UK fall the very bottom. Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and UNDP are quite good at joint funding of projects. Anecdotal from our interviews, I would have expected U.S. and Japan to be near the bottom in terms of joint-financing. They de-emphasized cooperation with other donor partners as important to their mission. However, both said they worked with Ugandan government when planning projects.³⁹ Also while I sorted by commitments (intentions seem to matter in this case, and I'll give them the benefit of the doubt), actual disbursements for joint projects or even just total number of joint projects can greatly differ. It is important to note, that to get a number for total commitments/disbursements by agency in joint projects, I had to take the total amount of the project and divided by number of donors. This will obviously greatly skew some countries commitment.

³⁹ We never were able to make contact with China and UK DfID declined our offer for an interview.

Joint?	No	Yes	Total	Percentage
AGRICULTURE EDUCATION	1	0	1	0%
BUDGET SUPPORT	120	0	120	0%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	2	0	2	0%
SECURITY	1	0	1	0%
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	75	0	75	0%
TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY	6	0	6	0%
EDUCATION	71	3	74	4%
HEALTH	71	4	75	5%
WORKS AND TRANSPORT	24	2	26	8%
WATER AND ENVIRONMENT	45	4	49	8%
AGRICULTURE	25	3	28	11%
JLOS	19	3	22	14%
ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT	25	4	29	14%
ACCOUNTABILITY	25	7	32	22%
PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT	23	7	30	23%
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY	3	1	4	25%
Grand Total	536	38	574	7%

Table 7: Joint Project Analysis, Source: AidData dataset

Lastly, in Table 8, we can see what type of projects are most likely to be done as joint programming. Most likely is public sector management and information and communication technology. Surprisingly, agriculture, social development, education, fall near the bottom. The public sector management makes sense because of the 2012 Office of Prime Minister scandal⁴⁰, donors want to appear to be fixing the problem. Individual projects may receive more scrutiny than joint ones.

⁴⁰ In 2012, donors' relationship with the government deteriorated following Uganda's auditor general report that the Office of the Prime Minister had embezzled millions of dollars in aid money. The scandal caused most bilateral donors to switch their aid spending from on-budget to off-budget aid. Donors further

CONCLUSION

While I am doubtful that open aid information will significantly affect donor coordination, I still think the information can be beneficial in many other ways, as I will discuss in the next two chapters. However, to improve the existing information out there and to create a system where donors can at least more easily inform others of what they are doing, I recommend the following actions be taken in Uganda.

1. Increase the Government of Uganda's political commitment to support the maintenance and use of the AMP system. This will require increased personnel and trainings, as well as a transfer from emphasis on the status quo spread sheet to emphasis on an integrated aid management platform.

2. Address technical difficulties in accessing the UAMP online. This includes enabling the system to load on multiple browsers. It also means that platform should be accessible beyond all firewalls. Once this happens, then a re-training for donor partners on how to upload and use the information needs to be done. Server capacity should also be enhanced at the Ministry of Finance.

3. Increase donor commitment and buy-in to both support reporting to the UAMP and using data from the UAMP. Currently, most people responsible for the aid management platform are individuals from the economist working group. Very few of these individuals have buy-in from country-directors or even their supervisors, and therefore have little incentive to enter in the information; especially since it can be a very cumbersome process.

threatened to withdraw aid from Uganda after Parliament passed an anti-homosexual bill in 2014. One of the bilateral donors explained that the donors who have continued to provide on-budget support have more trust in the anti-corruption institutions that the government has been building up since 2007. Since the 2012 scandal, much of the on-budget aid that donors give has gone towards public financial management reform and technical assistance for planning.

If the Ministry of Finance, perhaps in partnership with Development Gateway, can create buy-in from heads of agency, who then champion the use of UAMP by the AMP focal points and other staff within their organization, there will be more incentive to enter and use information. In addition, if the Ugandan government starts publishing information and using it to inform decisions, there will be more pressure on donors to enter information correctly and promptly.⁴¹

4. Make information divisible by how much a donor funds within joint projects. Currently, only total project amount is entered in the system, not what each individual donor gave. There should be a way for a donor to enter in how much they have specifically to the project, and who they partnered with. This way, we can get more realistic numbers of what each donor gave, not just overall holistic aid pictures of how much aid is given. This is crucial when you talk about donor accountability.

5. Include project descriptions. In the current state, there are project titles as vague as “PRDP”⁴² to as detailed as “THE PROJECT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CLASSROOM BLOCKS AT FIVE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KITGUM DISTRICT”. A low level of detail does not allow a donor to coordinate with going to other sources to obtain information because they have no idea what the donor is actually doing with PRDP. However, if additional information is collected to describe the project in three to four sentences, the donor would have a lot more information to decide if they want to explore coordinating with this donor.

6. Include donor projected spending. If a donor has already committed funds to a project, it is likely too late to coordinate with them. Therefore, the system needs to include

⁴¹ As will discuss in next chapter, publishing open aid information in Nepal has created pressure on donors to enter information into the system. Donors also have incentives to frequently update their information.

⁴² Norwegian Project in 2008

information on donor projections so other donor partners are able to make an informed donor coordination decision. However, with certain agencies this may not be easily attainable. For example, USAID only knows funding one year in advance. Other donors are going to be strongly reluctant to share information if projects are not finalized, for fear they will be held accountable for planned projects that are later amended or canceled. This barrier alone may be the biggest barrier to ever using open aid information for donor coordination.

Addressing all of these will take a lot of money, an improved process for how to report information, and a lot of personal and capacity to teach others how to use the information. With all the information and processes in place, the impact on donor coordination will still not be a certainty.

Chapter 3: Government Use: *Nepal Case Study*

In this chapter, I study how open aid information affects recipient government decision-making in Nepal. Many have suggested that with improved and open aid information, or even just improved access to information, the government will be able to take further ownership of aid spending and allocation in the country.⁴³ This hypothesis rests on the assumption that the recipient government is the best actor to make these decisions, which many may refute. However, even for those that do not agree with the underlying assumption, many still believe that recipient governments should know where and when projects occur (or more importantly *will* occur).⁴⁴ As well as how much aid is allocated to districts and specific sectors. Despite many assumptions and beliefs about government use of open aid information, not many have studied government use of the information. This section sets out to test how governments could improve decision-making, or even just understanding of the aid situation, with existing data.

Overall, I found that with existing open aid data, the Nepal government could discover a wealth of information on the aid landscape in the country.⁴⁵ With existing information, it is fairly easy to retrieve important information on things like aid predictability, aid reliability between years, and sector alignment with national goals. The Nepal Government already analyzes open aid information in the Development Cooperation Report, and because of it, has set new foreign policy laws and regulations.⁴⁶ Given these existing feedback loops and the government's use of the data, I believe the data in Nepal will continue to improve and the government will continue to take further control of the aid situation. Because there were little challenges with using existing data, I believe other

⁴³ IATI Annual Report. 2014. <http://www.aidtransparency.net/reports/IATI-annual-report-2014.pdf>

⁴⁴ *The Way Forward: A Reform Agenda for 2014 and Beyond*. Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network. April 2014 http://www.modernizeaid.net/documents/MFAN_Policy_Paper_April_2014.pdf

⁴⁵ Note: the April 2014 earthquake in Nepal may dramatically affect aid management in the future.

⁴⁶ International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, *Development Cooperation Report FY 2012/2013*

countries could replicate Nepal. Unlike the case of donor use in Uganda, there does not seem to be a lack of desire to use the information.

ROLE OF RECIPIENT GOVERNMENT IN OPEN DATA AND AID INFORMATION

Publish What You Fund writes,

Recipient governments struggle to know how much aid is invested in their country, let alone where and how it is spent. Recipients need more information to make the most effective use of their own money alongside that of donors. When donors don't publish their spending plans, this impedes the recipient's ability to plan long term projects, which in turn hinders development. When recipients can't include aid flows in their budgets and planning, it is hard for parliament and civil society to hold them to account.⁴⁷

In addition in Malawi's Open Aid Map, the Weaver et al state that maps made from open aid information may be useful because

First, government ministries within recipient countries may use the maps to track aid distribution. Most relevant, ministries of finance and planning will want to track aid for the purposes of understanding how much aid is flowing into the country as well as to plan their own activities. In addition, line ministries (such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Education) may find the maps useful in sectoral budget planning and program coordination.⁴⁸

There are many decision-makers involved in the budgeting and aid allocation process. In some ways, it has already been seen how open information has improved decision-making in Nepal. The national budget process is led by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning Commission. With the Central Bank, they estimate the total revenue

⁴⁷ "The Global Campaign for Aid Transparency." *Publish What You Fund*. Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/>>.

⁴⁸ Weaver, Catherine, Stephen Davenport, Justin Baker, Michael Findley, Christian Peretsakis, and Josh Powell. "Malawi's Open Aid Map." World Bank Institute (2014): n. pag. Web. 11 Apr. 2015. <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/Data/wbi/wbicms/files/drupal-acquia/wbi/malawi_case_study%281%29.pdf>.

and spending for the annual budget. They then determine annual expenditure limits for sector ministries and, following feedback from line ministries, negotiate the final allocation amounts based on the past expenditure levels, internal and external sources of funding of the ministries Departments, district offices and local bodies. Government officials reported consuming data in the course of budgeting, decision-making, planning processes, budget forecasting, formulation and the design of interventions.⁴⁹ Primarily the government offices use information to predict the situation of investment, set government priorities and ensure effective outreach of their plans and programs for better outcomes. Specifically, the Ministry of Finance uses data for formulating the overall government budget. The ministry wants stakeholders⁵⁰ to use government data in replicable (research based and productive) rather than duplicable (presenting data in a way it was produced) manner.⁵¹

There are gaps in public spending and output, which could be traced through research as a part of the replicable use of data. “Such innovative ideas would substantially help the ministry in designing interventions for reforms,” said Baikuntha Aryal, Chief of Budget Formulation Division at the Ministry of Finance.⁵² There are big emerging opportunities for the use of open data in undertaking in-depth research that the government could use as inputs for its budgetary works. Open data would allow people to carry out such research from outside of government, as there is no functional agency with the ministry to coordinate these things. Similarly, the National Planning Commission (NPC) commonly uses AMP data in the course of decision-making processes, budget forecasts, and formulation of multi-year budgets and intervention designs. Gopinath Mainali, Joint-

⁴⁹ *Exploring the emerging impacts of open aid data and budget data in Nepal*, Freedom Forum, August 2014, p. 43

⁵⁰ Note: it is not clear who the Ministry believes are the appropriate stakeholders.

⁵¹ Ibid, P. 42

⁵² Ibid, p. 41

Secretary of the NPC, reported that the NPC primarily uses data to predict the situation of investment, set government priorities and ensure effective outreach of its plans and programs for better outcomes.⁵³

We have already recognized that donors thus far have not often include planned or future spending in reported open aid information provided in the AMPs or IATI. In addition, I get the sense that governments want to know a lot more than just how much aid is invested; they want to know much more specific information. In this chapter, I will put myself in the shoes of the Nepalese government and track aid flow to the country, and focus on how I would use the information for government planning purposes.

NEPAL, AID AND OPEN DATA

The AMP

The Government of Nepal, specifically the Ministry of Finance established the Aid Management Platform (AMP) with the support of United Nations Development Programme and DFID, and the technical assistance of Development Gateway. The system was installed in April 2010 in the Foreign Aid Coordination Division (FACD) of the Ministry of Finance, to assist with the work of the International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division (IECCD). The AMP was made public in July 2013 with geo-coded information, budget integration and a public website.⁵⁴ The AMP has been customized to meet the need of development planning of the country, and to help cope with existing aid fragmentation. It currently includes 80 International Non-governmental Organizations

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 42

⁵⁴ International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, *Development Cooperation Report FY 2012/2013*, p. 3

(INGOs) and the Government of Nepal intends to roll it out to all aid organizations in the country. The most recent version of the AMP was launched in December 2014 at the 7th Annual Aid Management Program Good Practices Workshop, jointly organized by the Ministry of Finance and the Development Gateway and that included the participants from 11 countries. The AMP 2.01 includes updated dashboards, maps, reports and other new features.⁵⁵

By many accounts Nepal has one of the most developed AMP systems and has some of the greatest government and political buy in.⁵⁶ According to *Exploring the Emerging Impacts of Open Aid Data and Budget Data in Nepal* by Freedom Forum, the AMP contributes to a better understanding of the relation between aid priorities of the government and donors.⁵⁷ With the information from this platform, the Government of Nepal enriched the publication of Development Cooperation Reports (DCR)⁵⁸ and shaped the discussion for a new Development Cooperation Policy that would replace the existing one (Foreign Aid Policy of 2002). In the 2012/2013 DCR, the International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division (IECCD) emphasized that through AMP they had greater access Development Partners' aid allocation information, especially off-budget⁵⁹, such as Technical Assistance. Interestingly, in the same Freedom Forum Report, the main drivers of open data in Nepal has been civil society and technical activists, unlike in most

⁵⁵ International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division (2013), *Newsletter*, volume 3, issue 1, http://www.mof.gov.np/uploads/document/file/newsletter_NOV_DEC_20150129084948.pdf

⁵⁶ "Interview with Development Gateway." Personal interview. 19 Sept. 2015.

⁵⁷ *Exploring the emerging impacts of open aid data and budget data in Nepal*, Freedom Forum, August 2014, p. 26

⁵⁸ The DCR is a part of the Government of Nepal's efforts to increase transparency of aid information in Nepal. It is created by the Ministry of Finance. It includes a host of summary information and analysis of Nepal's aid situation.

⁵⁹ On-budget aid is aid given by donors directly to the government. Off-budget aid is funneled directly to projects led by donors and implementing partners. The government has little to no oversight or direction of this aid.

other countries where it was driven by government and World Bank. They write “the Nepali government has not been a key proponent as yet, and a lead has not been taken by any ministries usually involved in open data initiatives.”⁶⁰

The AMP Nepal version 2.01 includes geocoded information that localizes projects at the project site level, as well as district, zone and region in a map. Each project can be linked to a project page in the main platform that provides details such as financial flows, activities, donor agencies involved, implementing partners and dates of implementation of the project. The AMP map includes statistical data on poverty, population and literacy rates across the country. A series of filters (funding type, sector, program, activity, funding type, etc.) help the user create a customized version of the map for data analysis and visualization. Geocoded information of project sites, donor and planned commitments and disbursements can be exported as an excel file.

The AMP includes a dashboard to visualize aid allocation in terms of top donors, regions and sectors, as well as aid flows predictability and funding types in the periods of 2001 to 2017 and 1997 to 2017, respectively. In addition, the AMP provides 5 report functions: on-off budget projects by Ministry, all projects by donors, commitments for ongoing projects in the current fiscal year and all projects by district. The dashboard graphs and the reports can be customized using several filters. Finally, the online platform provides current information on agreements and news of Development Partners in Nepal and a link to recent publications of the Ministry of Finance.

⁶⁰ Ibid, P. 42

Role of Foreign Aid

Foreign aid plays an important role in Nepal, representing 22 percent of the national budget in FY2013-2014 and financing most of the development expenditures. The main sectors receiving external support are education (15%), health (13%), local development (12%), roads (11%). The total volume of ODA disbursement recorded in FY 2012-13 was USD 0.96 billion; approximately 49 percent from multilateral donors, 41 percent from OECD DAC bilateral donors and 10 percent from south-south cooperation partners⁶¹ - notably India and China - although the latter is not well reported.

The new Development Cooperation Policy currently aims to increase development effectiveness by designating the finance minister as the only government body that can negotiate with development partners for foreign assistance, and it sets thresholds for foreign loans, concessional loans and grants at USD 20 million, USD 10 million and USD 5 million. The new policy also requires all international and national non-governmental organizations to report details about their funding and programs to the Aid Management Platform.

There are a number of excellent sources for Open Data in Nepal beyond the AMP. I found the following most accessible and rich with information:

- 2014/15 budget information <http://data.opennepal.net/content/red-book-budget-ministry-wise-expenditure>

⁶¹ “**South-South cooperation** is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, subregional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts.” United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

- Open Contracting Information: <http://data.opennepal.net/content/red-book-budget-ministry-wise-expenditure>
- Open aid Partnership map: <http://www.openaidmap.org/application.php?dg=Nepal>
- OECD CRS: <http://data.opennepal.net/content/crs-aid-data-apr-17-2014>
- IATI: <http://data.opennepal.net/content/foreign-aid-data-nepal-14th-january-2014-iaty-registry>

ANALYSIS

Based on the predictions and hypothesis of how governments *should* use open aid information, I decided to explore the ease and constraints of actually answering each question with existing information.

Question One: How much total aid money has Nepal received?

I started with the Nepal AMP website and the front page tells me that 6103.00 million USD has been disbursed. However, I more want to know how much total aid money comes in each year. I therefore go to the dashboard sub-page on the AMP website to see the data broken up by year. However, on the dashboard, there are a number of great looking charts, such as top donor agencies, top regions, top sectors, etc. Unfortunately, there is a set filter for date range (2001-07-15 to 2020-07-16) and I cannot change it. Luckily, one chart “Aid Predictability” breaks it up by year.

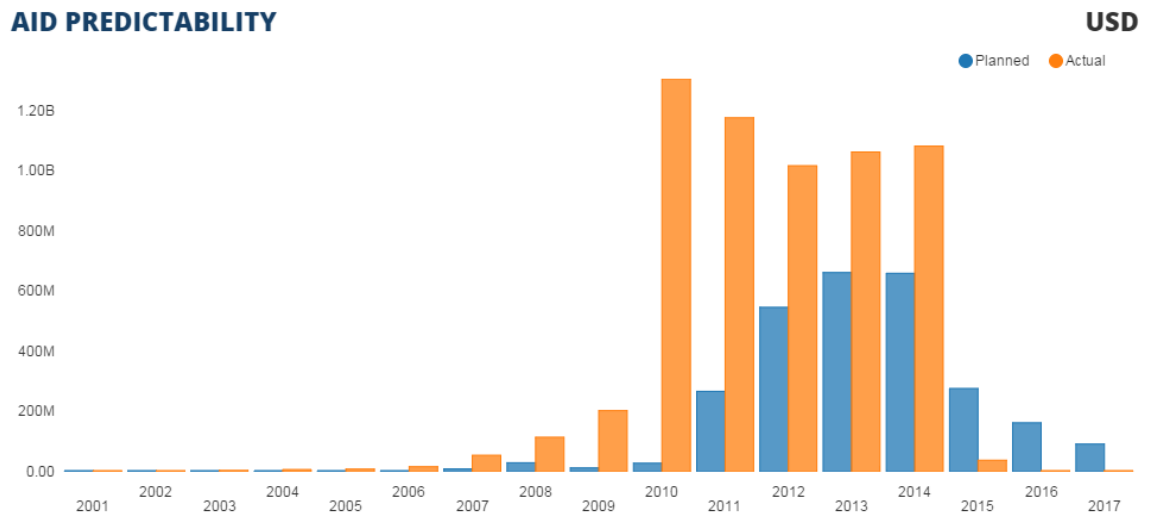


Figure 9: Aid Predictability, Source: Nepal AMP Website

I therefore can see that in 2014, USD660 million was planned, and USD1.08 billion was disbursed. I find it unusual that consistently more is given than planned but I will investigate this later. There is no explanation given on the dashboard about how these numbers are generated.

I wanted to check these numbers against other open aid information sources. I started with IATI. I downloaded the IATI dataset and discovered almost immediately it would be near impossible to get 2013 and 2014 commitments/disbursements. They list the start and end date of projects, and total commitment or disbursement for project, but they do not list how much was given each year. Therefore, I have no way of breaking down each individual year commitment and disbursement with this dataset.

I then moved on to OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS). They only had numbers up until 2013. In 2013 they reported that USD1,033.55 million was disbursed. The AMP reported that in 2013 USD663 million was planned, and USD1.06 billion was disbursed. Given there may be slightly different donors reporting, I am actually surprised the 2013 disbursements are only off by less than .03 billion. It seemed that most sources

indicated government would only need to know ballpark of how much money they received, potentially not exact numbers

Question Two: What percent of the national budget comes from foreign aid?

This question seems relatively easy. I already have the foreign aid numbers for 2013 and 2014 so I just need to figure out what the total budget was. The budget expenditure for 2014/2015 was 646,821,098,000 Rupees (RS). Other sources say 618b RS, however.⁶²

Therefore, I need to convert RS to USD. I use the current exchange rate of .016RS to USD. This equals USD10,399,646,535.28 or USD9.936,258,385.31, depending which figure you use. This tells us that aid makes up 10.38% of the budget or 10.87% of the budget.

However, I then realized that source for some of the national budget expenditures is “foreign”. Therefore I was potentially double counting some aid as both budget and as foreign aid. If I take out foreign source, government budget is only approximately RS294 billion while foreign sourced was RS352 billion, making 83% of budget comes from foreign aid, which seems way too high. I could only find that government announced in 2011/2012 that 27% of its budget comes from foreign assistance. I could not find any more recent updated figures.

According to the Development Cooperation Report for 2012 and 2013, external aid represents about 22 percent of the national budget in FY 2013-14, and these resources finance most of the development expenditures.⁶³ The total government expenditure is

⁶² Shrestha, Prithvi. "Nepal Budget 2014-15: Govt Presents Rs 618 Billion Budget." Kathmandu Post 13 July 2014: n. pag. Print.

⁶³ International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, *Development Cooperation Report FY 2012/2013*, p. 3. Note: They do not give further explanation on how this was calculated or what data they used to find figure.

estimated to be about 28 percent of GDP, whereas the internal revenue collected was about 17.4 percent of GDP (2012-13). Foreign aid accounted for about 6.2 percent of GDP¹ in FY 2012-13. As such, foreign aid is instrumental in supplying the required resources for overall development of the country

While I thought this would be an easy exercise, I am completely lost as to what the correct percentage is even with pretty accessible budget and foreign aid information. This exercise proves that even with great open, accessible information, the nuances of the data can be hard to decipher if you are not an expert on it and understand completely how it was collected. Subject matter experts in the Nepal Government may be able to get to the exact right number, many other government individuals will have to accept that the number is somewhere between 10-80%.

Question three: What sectors receive the most aid?

The AMP dashboard tells me the following: (note dates are from 2001-07-15 to 2020-07-16)

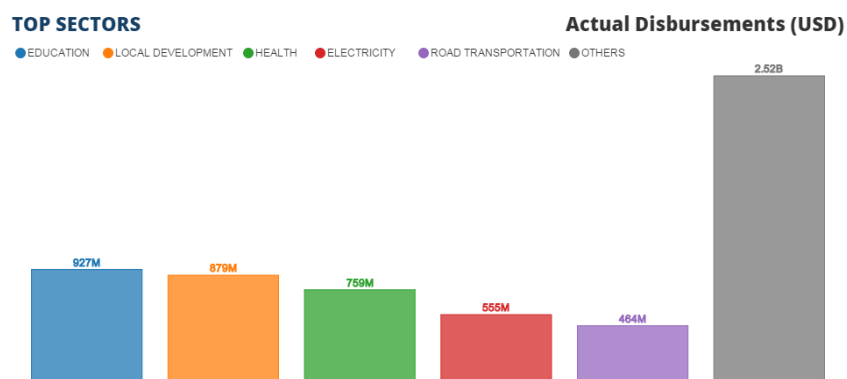


Figure 10: Top Sector Actual Disbursements, Source: AMP Website

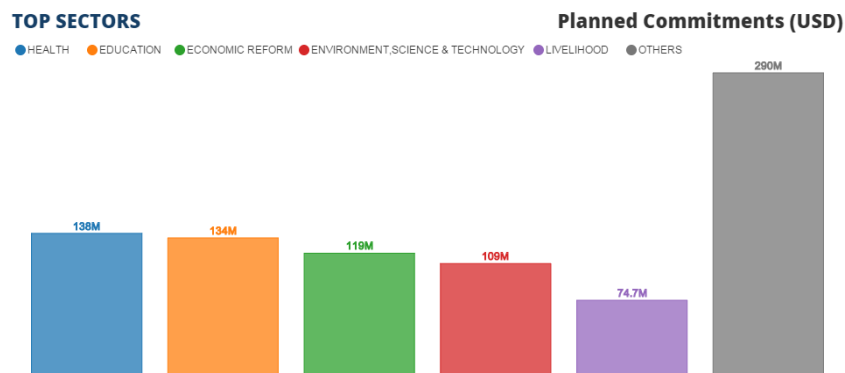


Figure 11: Top Sector Planned Commitments, Source: AMP Website,

First glance, I think this is interesting but troubling because I have no idea what “other” means, and it accounts for a large portion of aid. Also, it may or may not be important to the government that there were some really large projects in the early to mid-2000s that skewed these numbers to one sector. Instead, I most likely want to know, in the last year or two what sector is getting the most money. For this, I need raw data since I cannot change my date filter. I therefore, downloaded the AidData AMP dataset for Nepal AMP projects to 2014.⁶⁴ I then filtered based on those projects that had funds committed in 2013. I chose 2013 because most 2014 projects were not yet loaded into the website. I also chose commitments over disbursements, because I thought intentions matter when picking a sector. I included maps based on the AidData sector name and the AMP sector name. The data includes both classification since they vary slightly in their sector coding methodology.

⁶⁴ AidData. 2014. Geocoded data from the Nepal Ministry of Finance's Aid Management Platform, Version 1.0. Accessed March 18, 2014. <http://aiddata.org/geocoded-datasets>

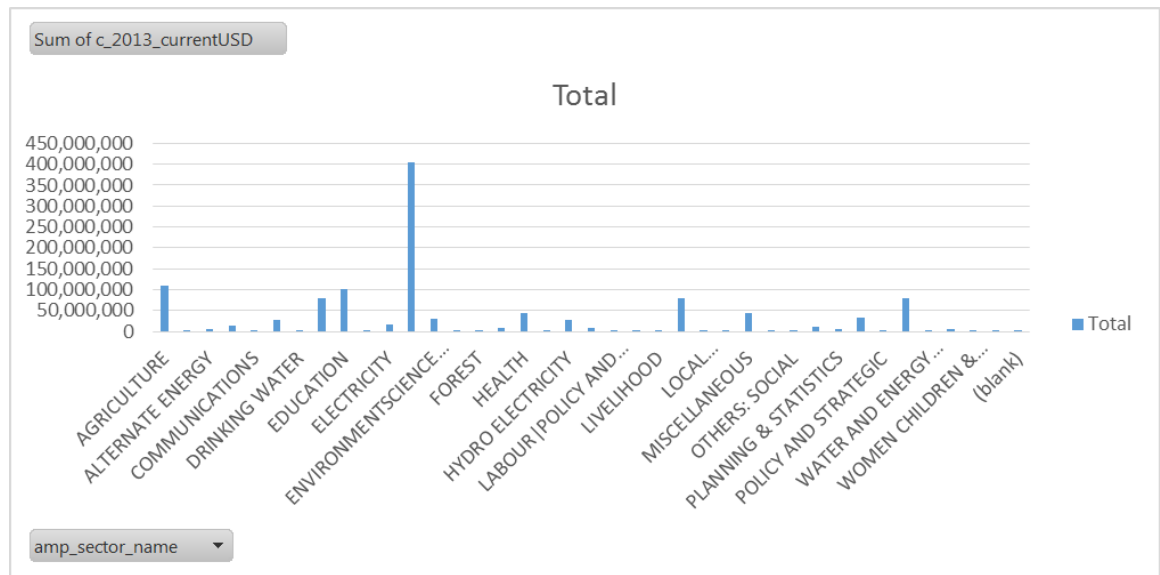


Figure 12: AMP Sector Analysis, using AMP Sector Names. Source: AidData dataset

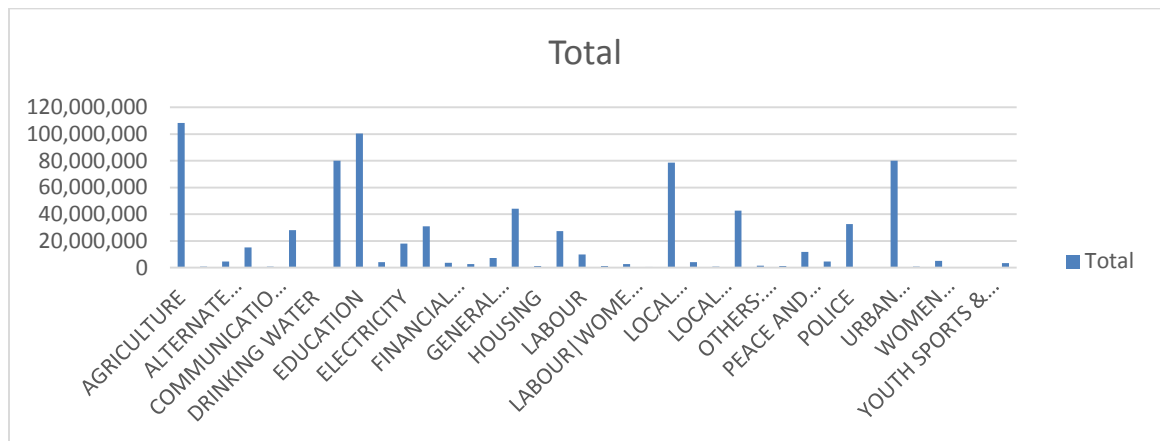


Figure 13: AMP Sector Analysis, using AidData Sector Codes, Source: AidData dataset

In both maps, we can see that energy generation/electricity are the biggest projects by monetary terms. This number is largely skewed by the Tanahu Hydropower Project, co-

financed by the Asian Development Bank, European Investment Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Nepal Electricity Authority.

Without that project, it is much easier to see the sectors that currently receive the most money. For example, agriculture, and education receive the most money.

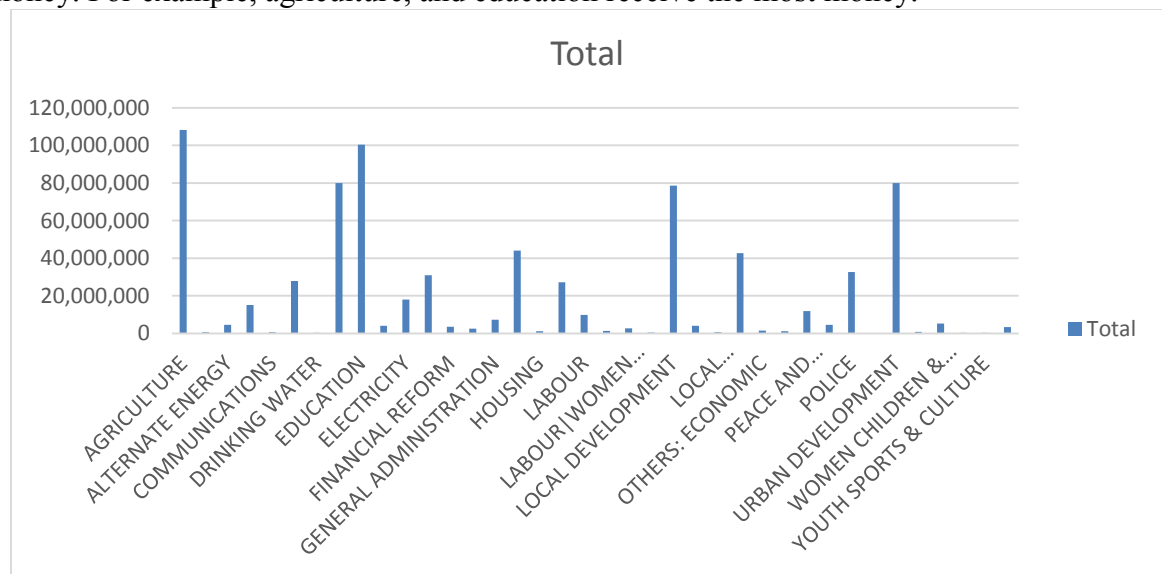


Figure 14: AMP Sector Analysis excluding project, Source: AidData dataset

Again, your answer to this question would slightly vary depending on which classification you use for sector, AidData or AMP classification. The data contains both, so a normative decision needs to be made on which classification is more reliable for your purposes. However, you can get a general idea that electricity receives the most, while education, agriculture, local development and urban development are not too far behind. For 2012/2013 year, the Government of Nepal reported that education sector received the most aid, which makes me wonder if they also excluded the large electricity outlier project.

Question Four: Do these sectors align with the Government of Nepal's National Development Plan?

In accordance with the principles of the Paris declaration and other international forums, Donor Partner's' assistance strategies are supposed to align with the development strategies of the Government of Nepal (GoN). In fact, in a recent report by Donor Partners, they claim that this is currently taking place. The Government of Nepal would definitely want to know do they really align. The government of Nepal has a focus on infrastructure, including hydro and road sector. Specifically, they lay out the thirteen national plan for 2013 to 2016. These are:

Priorities:

- Hydro and other energy development
- Agriculture productivity, diversification and commercialization
- Road and other physical infrastructures
- Social sector: basic education, health, drinking water and sanitation
- Tourism, industry and trade
- Good governance

Because I already know the one hydro project skews our numbers, I decided to see if agriculture project or Road and other infrastructure projects increased in 2013 to align with the national priorities.

I did this by going back to my AidData dataset and sorting the data based on road and agriculture sector projects, using AMP's classification rather than AidData. I then separated them into years, based first on actual start date. Then for those missing start date, I did date of effectiveness.⁶⁵ For those that had neither, combed through when commitments and disbursements were for to fill in this missing information. It is unclear

⁶⁵ Date of effectiveness is typically the same as the date of agreement, or when the contract was signed. In cases of agreed upon project delays it is after the date of agreement.

to me why the information is missing. There were multiple projects that just had no date associated with them so I deleted them from the set. One example of this is Kanti LokPath Road Project.

I then created a pivot table and chart to examine the data.

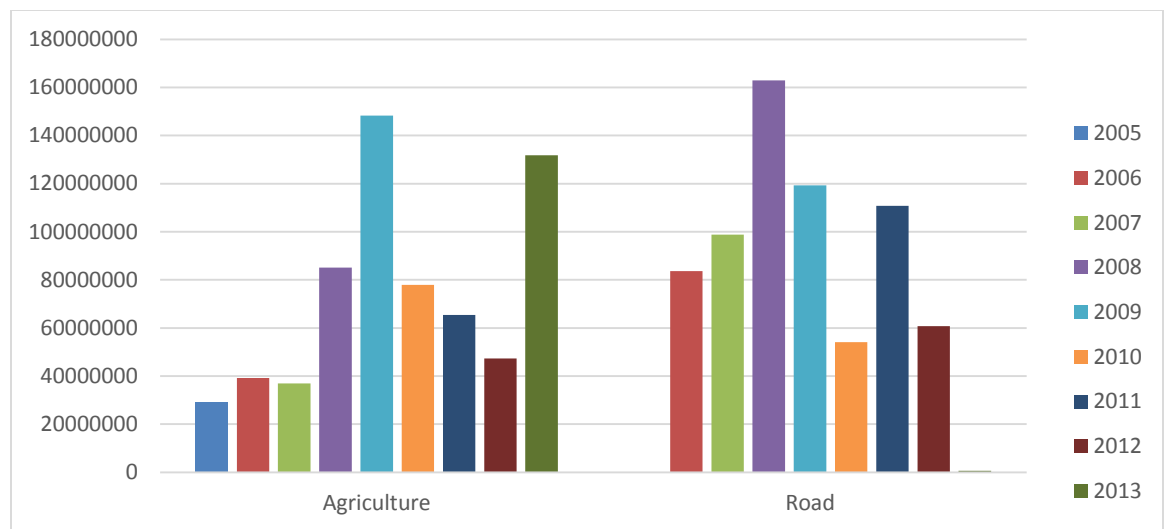


Figure 15: National Development Alignment, Source: AidData Dataset

Here you can see that agriculture did significantly increase in 2013, as you would predict if donors followed priorities set out by the government of Nepal. However, roads significantly decreases. Because building roads and infrastructure can be a significantly cost intensive project, this may be attributed to recent completion of many projects. It is also important to note that in this data set we do not have 2014 commitments. It could be that 2013 commitments were already made before the plan was set in place, and procurement/planning for infrastructure takes longer than it does for many other projects. It also could be that government priorities do not have a very much short-term influence

over donor partners. With the data that exists, this was the best analysis I could do if I was trying to figure out donor alignment with national priorities.

Question Five: How predictable is aid?

There are two components that go into answering this question. 1. How much does the disbursed amount of aid change each year? And 2. How much of what is committed is disbursed?

This was a fairly easy exercise. I summed the amount disbursed for each year. I then calculated the percent change each year and put the information into a time series chart.

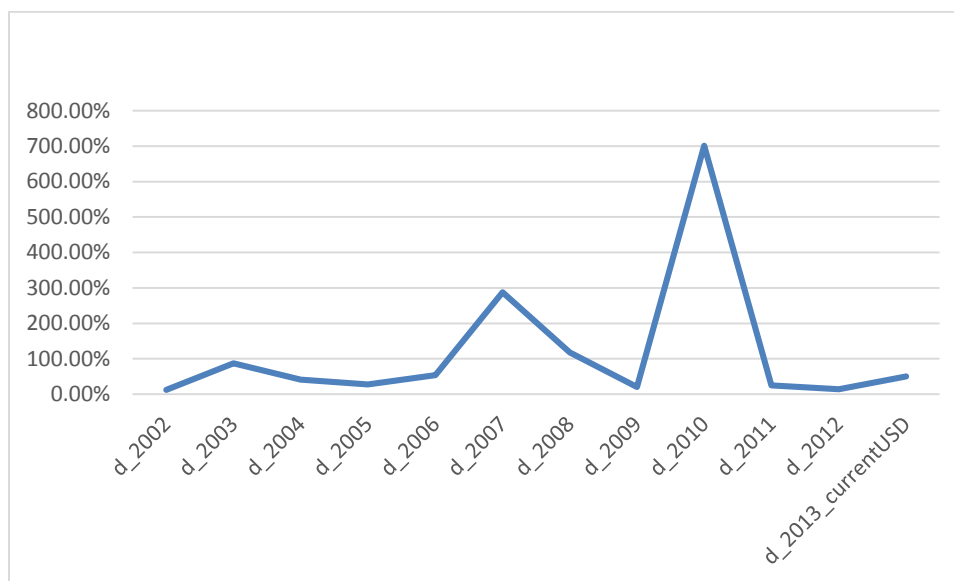


Figure 16: Percentage change in aid each year, Source: AidData Dataset

From this, it is easy to tell that aid disbursed is not super predictable. The 700% increase in 2010 is outstandingly abnormal. This creates an absolute average change of over 119% between each year. If aid amounts disbursed changes this much between each year, how is the government to accurately plan? The large spike could be attributed to one

large infrastructure project, or a HIPC debt write-off. However, without contextual knowledge, it is difficult to tell what accounted for this spike.

Next, I check to see how much of commitments align with actual disbursements. As pointed out in the beginning I found it very interesting on the AMP dashboard that it said disbursements were somewhat significantly higher than commitments. This is seen in the aid predictability chart (Figure 9). I had always assumed that donors over committed and under delivered. When I began this investigating however, I realized I had misinterpreted the planned the “aid predictability” graph (figure 9). I unfortunately could not find what was designated as “planned” and what was not in the data.

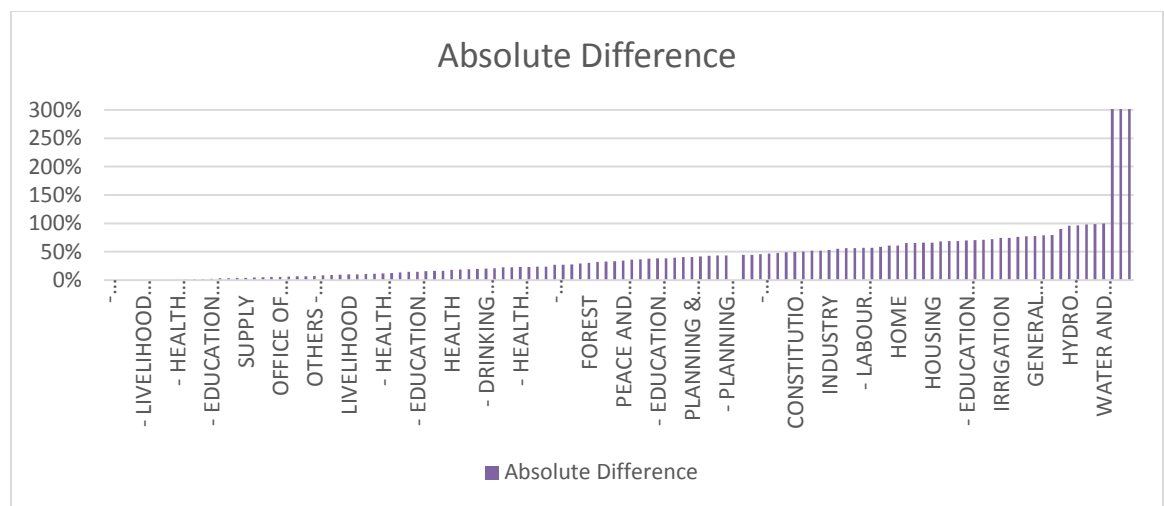


Figure 17: Absolute Difference of commitments versus disbursements by sector.
Source: AidData dataset

I therefore, used commitment versus disbursements. The government of Nepal needs to know for planning purposes if what is committed is actually disbursed. On the AMP website, I discovered a section called reports where I could download information

on project information by donor for 2013 and 2014. This has NGO information in addition to bilateral and multilateral donors. It also has Committed and Disbursed funds. Since the data comes in report form, I spent about 1.5 hours cleaning the data. Perhaps if I actually worked for the government and was well connected, I would have access to raw data and would not have to spend my time formatting. Just as likely, I would have to spend time formatting even if I received the data in raw form, given the many ways to view and edit the data.

In all of these sectors, the donors disbursed more than they committed. However, overall donors commit more than 44% compared to what they actually deliver.

I also used this data to identify the donors that were most likely to not fulfill on their commitments.

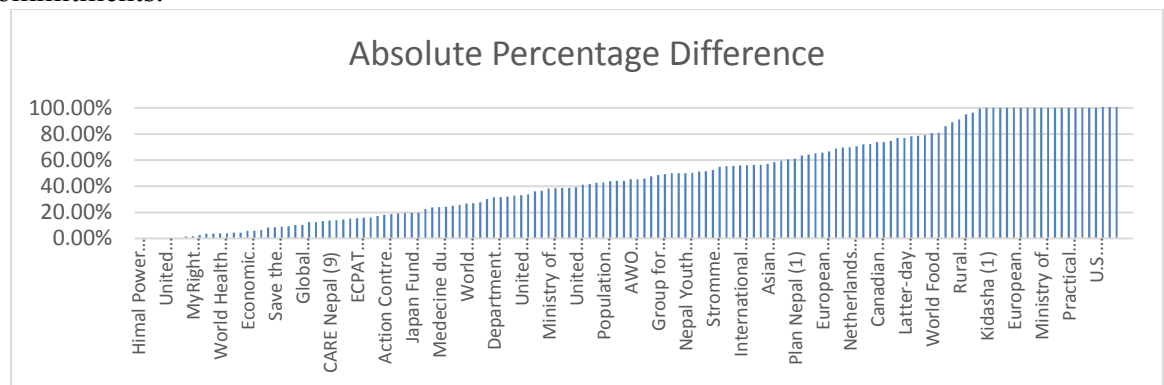


Figure 18: Absolute Difference between Sectors, Source: AidData dataset

In particular, you can see those with the biggest differences.

The Blueberry Hills Cha	304,008.04	1,014,160.95	233.60%	233.60%
Handicap International	1,123,749.11	12,738,503.53	1033.57%	1033.57%
Individual donor (privat	45,120.20	1,021,920.39	2164.88%	2164.88%

Table 8: Difference in commitments versus disbursements by donor, Source: AidData Dataset

Interestingly individual private donors (no specific information given in dataset on which ones) are the most likely to have differences between commitments and disbursements. There are also quite a few donors that commit funds and do not disburse them. There is really interesting potential of what the government could do with this data to hold donors accountable for their actions, as well as to better plan.

Question Six: Can district level government officials and advisors use this information?

The Donor Initiatives Transparency Report of 2011 report states that “there is difficulty getting information on aid to districts due to some programs being reluctant to provide information and there being limited availability of information. In the latter case much of the information was classified as multi-sectoral when much of this could probably have been assigned to a particular sector. Also many development partners’ central offices did not know what district-wise funds were being spent on. These difficulties suggest that local development officers (LDOs) will face the same challenges in getting hold of data on donor funded programs in their district.”

I therefore decided to explore what district level information could currently be used. I started with the AMP Dashboard but at most this provides information at the regional level. I decided to select a district and see what information I could find on it. I started with the map section on the AMP website and tried to underlay what regions/districts are the poorest. Unfortunately the poverty map never loaded after 25 minutes, and I decided to find another map.

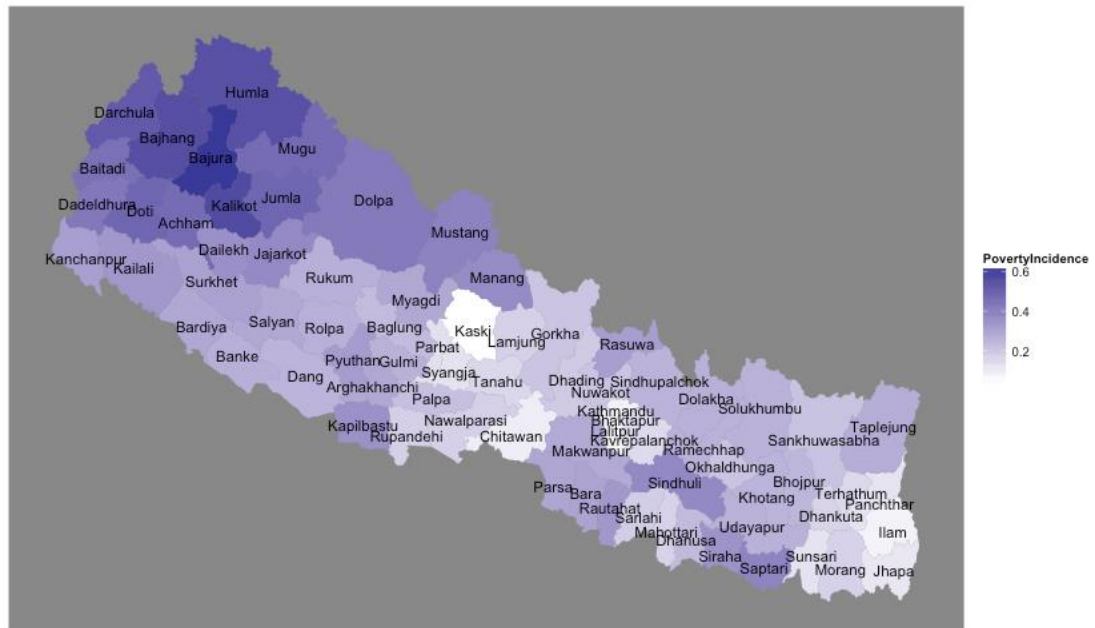


Figure 19: Highest rates of Poverty by District. Source: Sapkota, Chadan. "Comparisons with 2001." *Poverty by District in Nepal, Mapped*. Web. 12 Apr. 2015. <<http://prabhasp.github.io/NepalMaps/Poverty/>>

I decided to see what information I could find on Bajura, the district with the highest level of poverty incidence. Bajura is in the mountain region and has a population of 136,948 in 2011. In the AMP dataset, unlike in Uganda, there is no district level location information. There really is little location information unfortunately. I therefore resorted to just control-F searching for the term Bajura. This gave me the following results:

Agency	Project	Date of Agreement	Planned Completion	Extension	Extension	Type of Assistance	Mode of Payment	Primary Sector	On budget	Total commitment	total Disbursement
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (38)	Open Defecation Free Campaign and Sanitation and Hygiene Behaviour Promotion in Bajura District	07/12/2011	06/03/2013			Grant Aid	- Direct Payment Mode - Mode of Payment Unallocated	HEALTH	Off Budget	130000	117000
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (38)	District Level Master Trainers' ToT on Total Sanitation in Bajura District	07/12/2011	06/09/2012			Grant Aid	- Direct Payment Mode - Mode of Payment Unallocated	HEALTH	Off Budget	14992	10494
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (38)	Orientation on Total Sanitation and Behavioural Change to Schools, Communities and Local Stakeholders in Bajura	08/12/2011	07/03/2013			Grant Aid	- Direct Payment Mode - Mode of Payment Unallocated	HEALTH	Off Budget	67000	46900
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (38)	Capacity Development of Stakeholders on Sector Coordination and Planning in Bajura	07/12/2011	06/01/2013			Grant Aid	- Direct Payment Mode - Mode of Payment Unallocated	HEALTH	Off Budget	16000	12800

Table 9: Bajura Projects, Source: AidData dataset

I then decided to use the AMP Activity Search and decided to filter by location- which allowed me to use the term Bajura (Martadi). This action returned 69 results. The content resulting from this search is quite rich.

ID	Title	Donor Agency	Primary Sec	Location	Actual Start Date	Actual Complet	Actual Co	Actual Disbur
11534	Second Phase of Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project.	Asian Development Ba	LOCAL DEVELO	Bajura (Martadi)	1/2/2012		3,028,228	919,806
11647	Partnering to Save Children's and Mothers' Lives through Frontline Health Workers	Save the Children	HEALTH	Bajura (Martadi)	1/2/2012		235,000	234,752
10862	TA 7883-NEP: Building Climate Resilience of Watershed in Mountain eco-region	Asian Development Ba	FOREST	Bajura (Martadi)	1/4/2012		3,904,000	145,427
7353	Generation of productive employment for peace building	International Labour O	EDUCATION, L	Bajura (Martadi)	2/1/2012		86,057	80,133
10770	UK Support to Increase Resilience to Natural Disasters in Nepal	Department for Intern	ENVIRONMEN	Bajura (Martadi)	4/9/2012		1,046,616	858,156
7607	Open Defecation Free Campaign and Sanitation and Hygiene Behaviour Promotion in Bajura District	United Nations Human	HEALTH	Bajura (Martadi)	7/4/2012		130,000	117,000
11660	Nepal Strategic Program Framework on Education, Protection and Livelihoods -2013-2015	Save the Children	EDUCATION	Bajura (Martadi)	1/1/2013	1/1/2015	205,509	204,740
11752	Improving Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)	Save the Children	MISCELLANEO	Bajura (Martadi)	1/1/2013		42,843	30,655
10580	Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP)	Department for Intern	ALTERNATE EN	Bajura (Martadi)	10/1/2013		312,283	199,614
11645	"PAHUNCH" - (Surakshit Matritwa Sewa ma Pahunch)	CARE Nepal	HEALTH	Bajura (Martadi)	1/4/2014		431,986	206,168
10891	Rural Community Infrastructure Development Programme/Works (WFP CPAP 2013- 2017)	World Food Program	LOCAL DEVELO	Bajura (Martadi)	4/3/2014		10,260,685	0

Table 10: Bajura Projects, Source: AMP website dataset

The search tells me that there are about 11 projects currently going on, in a large variety of sectors. If I was a government official, I could check to see if these projects were actually occurring and conduct monitoring and evaluation of the projects. It is important to note that it's not clear if the 2012 projects are still going on or if any of the earlier start date projects were still going on, so I had to do my own guess. I also could use this information to check against what National government says about aid disbursement in the region. For example, if the government says because Bajura receives X dollars in education, we are going to decrease budget allocation. The district government could verify if this was true.

However, for district government to use this information, they would have to have internet access and knowledge of the AMP. They would also have to trust the data and

know what data is in there and what wasn't. Also more reliable project location would help in determining how to check on the project and conduct monitoring and evaluation.

Also it seems that no future commitments or projects in this situation. This indicates that there is no way for district officials to use it for coordinating purposes. They cannot see an NGO and a government entity that want to do similar projects to make the project more robust and potentially less burdensome for their government.

I think with technical access, training on how to use the system, a check on the quality of the data, increased exposure and a focus to put project commitments in the database, district level government use would be very exciting. It could make significant strides in improving project effectiveness, donor and NGO coordination and government ownership of projects.

CONCLUSION

The empirical tests conducted in the previous section demonstrate new and exciting ways that the Nepal government could inform its aid-related decision-making. With the proceeding recommendations, the government could ensure that all government employees, especially those in line ministries could successfully use the data to improve their decision-making.

1. Conduct robust Excel training for government employees. The tests demonstrated that an intermediate to advanced Excel level will allow a thorough analysis of the data and help to better inform decision-making. In many of the tests, I used pivot tables. In addition, to clean the data I used many mergers and even programmed some Macros to help speed the data cleaning process. Without this knowledge, government officials may be hesitant to use the data or may just not have the time to clean the data

themselves. In addition, data training would increase knowledge about the data. Many in the government, may not know the data exists or that it may help them in their day to day job even if they do not deal directly with aid or budget.

2. Allow for greater data filtering on the dashboard section of the website. The charts and graphs are an easy way to use the data but with limited filtering ability, it is hard to use the content for any meaningful analysis. Most specifically, it would be very helpful to limit data to one specific year.

3. When the government uses the data for analysis purposes, they should include methodology for how they conducted their analysis. For example, when attempting to figure out the percentage of the national budget that comes from foreign aid, I could not figure out how to get the same number the government did in the Development Cooperation Report. If methodology is included, data intermediaries and others can check how they got to the number or decision that they did.

4. Numerous different datasets seem to exist. In my questions, I used the AMP website, AMP report information, and AidData Nepal dataset. Each dataset was slightly different. The government should make it clear, which dataset is most appropriate to use and where they pulled their data from.

5. Like in Uganda, donor projections, or at minimum more future commitments, would greatly enhance government decision-making. It is hard to determine if donor aid aligns with government priorities unless there is future projections. After a new National Development Plan is released, government priorities would align with donor projections theoretically. With the current state of information, and long delays in project planning and procurement it is hard to determine if priorities are aligned between the two groups. However, as noted in the previous chapter, numerous forces contribute to donor project planning, and it is unlikely that donors would be willing and/or able to enter in future

projections for fear of having to commit to the project. Much of this information could be considered sensitive. Donors may also not plan projects well in advance.

6. More specific location information would greatly enhance local decision-makers ability to make effective aid-related decisions. The Uganda dataset contains more specific geolocation information than the Nepal dataset. In Uganda, the latitude and longitude of many projects are given, allowing decision-makers to know if the project falls within their district. In the Nepal dataset, only "location" is given, and this does not seem to align with any specific methodology. In some cases, the location is the district, in others it is the region. More specific methodology should be applied to allow local government to better access and use the information about their village or district.

These recommendations specific ways to improve government analysis and not critical barriers that prevent better government decision-making. Overall, I believe Nepal is well positioned to use open aid information to better inform government decision-making. I think the most existing and latent government use could from local decision-makers.

Chapter 4: Conclusions: Comparisons and the Future of Open Aid

COMPARISON: GOVERNMENT USE IN UGANDA AND DONOR USE IN NEPAL

Unlike my previous chapter on donor use in Uganda, I am excited about government use of open aid information in Nepal. I found I was able to answer the majority of my questions with the data that currently exists. With increased resources, the Nepal Ministry of Finance can better streamline the data collection process, and make the data more accessible to all government employees. With skills training and greater promotion of the AMP, I see many government officials being able to answer many important planning and allocation questions.

Thus far, I have found some significant differences between the Uganda and Nepal case studies. First, there are a lot more studies that use open aid information – specifically, the AMP - in Nepal than in Uganda. In Nepal, the Media, the government and CSO/Advocacy groups use the information to better understand the aid landscape. This indicates that awareness of the data is better in Nepal, and that likely so is trust in the data. In Uganda, in our donor interviews, we found there either is a reluctance to use the data because they do not believe the information is correct, or they do not know it exists. Because the data is being used in Nepal, there are feedback mechanisms. If a report in Nepal points out that in 2013, the U.S. State Department committed USD693,000 but disbursed none, the U.S. State Department now knows they need to either report what they did disburse or justify why they did not. Publishing information, makes donors accountable to keep information updated, if they care about public perception. Without this feedback mechanism in Uganda, there is little incentive to update information or use it.

Secondly, there is a very different political situation in each country. The Nepal government writes in the Development Cooperation Report

The Aid Management Platform (AMP) contains aid information regarding both on budget and off budget projects reported by IECCD and development partners. With a comprehensive data management plan in place, project information related to on budget activities are reported by IECCD whereas off budget projects are reported by development partners. Disbursement information for both on budget and off budget assistance is reported by development partners. To facilitate reporting aid data to AMP, development partners have assigned AMP focal points whereas IECCD has also its own dedicated AMP focal persons including core staffs supporting AMP.

To me, this means there is a clear delineation of responsibilities amongst governments and donor partners on how to keep information updated.

Also, assigning AMP focal points from each donor agency, and oftentimes implementing partners and NGOs, means that there is significant governmental will to keep the information updated. In Uganda, donor partners seem unclear on where responsibility lies and even more critically, does not seem to receive any pressure from the Ugandan government to publish information. In Nepal the situation is very different. “While drafting the report, development partners’ AMP focal points were communicated with preliminary summary data and frequently requested to revisit and update their information. Similarly, development partners were also requested to verify locations (districts) and missing information. Similarly, development partners were also requested to verify locations districts and missing information with respect to each project they were funding.” The frequent requests are critical to keeping the AMP up to date. This is not the case at all in Uganda. Most donors there reported they were asked once to submit information and received few trainings (the most recent being one year ago, according to our interviews in country).

There is significant difference in political commitment between Uganda and Nepal. In the December AMP workshop in Nepal, the Undersecretary for the Ministry of Finance

of Nepal spoke on Aid Data for policy formation.⁶⁶ He said the AMP data has been used for several reports, including the Development Cooperation Report that I cited many times in this chapter. He also said it was used in preparing technical assistance book submitted to Parliament every year during budget announcement. It was used to support resource Committee to estimate annual budget and three year project. It is used as a reference during annual budget discussions with line ministries and that media, students and civil society groups use information. Even more to the point, the Nepal government have used information from open aid to change its foreign aid policies to make foreign aid more effective. In June, the government announced a new foreign aid policy that makes it mandatory for donors to furnish the details of their technical assistance to the government systems. In addition, grants below \$5 million for a project will not be acceptable while concessional loans below \$10 million will be ruled out. These policy changes are clear indications of the power of open aid for government use, even sometimes to the dismay of donors.

I believe the differences in political will and use of the data can be overcome with increased government commitment and resources in Uganda. If the government began to show increased commitment to using AMP data and turned away from Excel sheets, there would be more pressure on donors to report accurate and up to date information in the AMP. In addition, if the government, media and NGOs began publishing and analyzing the data in the Ugandan AMP further, there would be more pressure for donors to keep information up to date. Then, like in Nepal, I believe the Ugandan government would be able to conduct similar levels of analysis that the Nepal government has already done. They

⁶⁶ Notes from the AMP Workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal on December 10th. Notes were recorded by UT PRP team.

could make more informed foreign aid policy decisions, and begin to set thresholds and incentives for donor coordination.

However, in reverse, even with Nepal's strong government commitment to the system and fairly reliable data, I still find little evidence that donors in Nepal will use the AMP or other open aid platforms to improve donor coordination, as many write they will.⁶⁷ During March interviews in Nepal, my PRP colleagues found that many donors cited that the AMP does not provide the level of richness needed for coordination purposes. More specifically, like in Nepal, they suggest that more thorough project descriptions would need to be collected. However, on the opposite side, many donors said that it would be a significant burden to collect and report this much information. Like in Uganda, the donors also suggested that project commitments would need to be known well in advance. The system does not include donor intentions. In addition, donors possess reliable data outside of the AMP, and other open aid information systems. From interviews, the team found that donors relied on a mix of close, interpersonal relationships and systematic, organized mechanisms, such as sector coordination meetings for information purposes. Because these sources pre-date the AMP and other transparency movements, many donors did not feel they needed a separate resource for information.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF OPEN AID DEMAND

My methodology prevents me from making any sweeping conclusions on the future of open aid from a country perspective. It is tempting to conclude that open aid will not increase donor coordination in any country and that the government of Uganda is so far behind Nepal in using existing data and systems that they may never catch up. However, the transparency movement is quickly growing, and as more begin to study demand and

⁶⁷ See Chapter 2 for citations

delineate best practices, it may be able to use data in new ways. I am hopeful that with renewed and increased government commitment and support from Development Gateway, the Ugandan government will soon be using and analyzing open aid data to optimize the use and allocation of aid.

I hope that more will study the use of open aid for donor coordination purposes and even more broadly, that more will begin to understand the nature of donor coordination. While many write about the need for donor coordination, few have precisely defined coordination. Very little seems to be known about donor incentives for coordination or even how mission offices and headquarters interact in regards to donor coordination. Until further research is done to prove otherwise, I believe that given all of open aid's lofty objectives and goals, its ability to increase donor coordination is the one left most unproven. However, I am excited about home country government use of aid information and believe this can bring significant improvements to aid effectiveness in country.

Appendix

I. Semi-Structured Interviews: Sampling Strategy and Design (From Chapter 2 of PRP Report, citation forthcoming)

The research team opted for conducting key informational interviews using a semi-structured approach.⁶⁸ The existing literature and the subject experts consulted favor this approach, because it is a flexible yet purposively structured method to collect information about actual donor awareness and use of open aid data in the field. The exploratory character of this research, required a technique that could easily adapt to changes in the initial hypotheses and allow new information to reshape the interview design.

The study included a structured sampling strategy for interviews that incorporated all key players (multilateral organizations, bilateral organizations, NGOs, think tanks, CSOs and select government officials) to better capture the complex scenario of donor work in-country. The sample also structured donor categories and inclusion criteria to compare findings across sites of study. Finally, in the U.S. case study, we targeted a comprehensive sample of congressional support staff members, relevant federal agencies, aid transparency advocates, and think tank experts who were very familiar with processes within Congress. The final list of interviewees incorporated several congressional offices

⁶⁸ While it would have been optimal to have a systematic survey among donors, subject experts suggested that response rate would have been low and implementation costly. Moreover, the study intended to understand donor use of open aid data without imposing a theory of open aid demand, which can be better accomplished through a semi-structured methodology.

and organizations to get a more complete understanding of the awareness and use of open aid data in a donor country with a stated commitment to aid transparency.

This study employs interview questions the researchers constructed using an inductive approach. This study aims to avoid making bold assumptions about the use of AMP data and systems. In an effort to avoid assumptions about use of open aid data, the researchers approach donors to understand current data sources, data use, and data needs in everyday operations to determine the existing information ecosystem. In this approach, the researchers test the overarching Theory of Change embedded in the supply of open aid data, as well as test this study's specific Theory of Change.

The process of constructing interview questions began with a literature review of current open data use and demand studies to understand current methods and approaches for this particular area of study. In addition to consulting the literature, the researchers also consulted subject matter experts to determine the content of questions to best answer the research questions set forth in Chapter 2. In light of this study's inductive approach, subject matter experts also assisted in sequencing of interview questions to uncover interviewees' data use and data needs.

After numerous consultations, a research team piloted the interview questions in Nepal in December 2014, which served to further refine the order and content of the final interview questions to be used in Uganda and Nepal in March 2015.

Given the selection of country case studies, the process of selecting participating donor partners in Nepal and Uganda was initiated identifying and reviewing of all donor organizations working in both countries. Participating donor partners were divided into three categories' of national agencies, bilateral and multilateral, based on their distinct functioning mechanisms and their approach to aid. This method reduced the risk of bias

characteristic of key-informant interviews and permitted a more accurate assessment of donor use of open aid data at the country level.

Following the identification of all participating donor organizations, the research team identified and shortlisted donor partners that were operating in both countries, in order to maintain consistency between cases. To provide variation and country context, we selected donors that were specific to the country and had significant local presence.

In addition to the selection of donor organizations based on presence in both countries, the research team also selected donors, both bilateral and multilateral, based on their representation of the proportion of aggregate country aid. Top aid contributing donors were selected, given their scope of presence in the country.

Within each donor partner, key-informants were selected on the basis of their level of awareness of the donor's decision-making processes and/or the donor's information needs and practices with respect to data on all development assistance within the country. Many of the interviewees were identified through email introductions with our partners (USAID, DG, AidData), followed by snowball sampling after identifying additional informants in the field.

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